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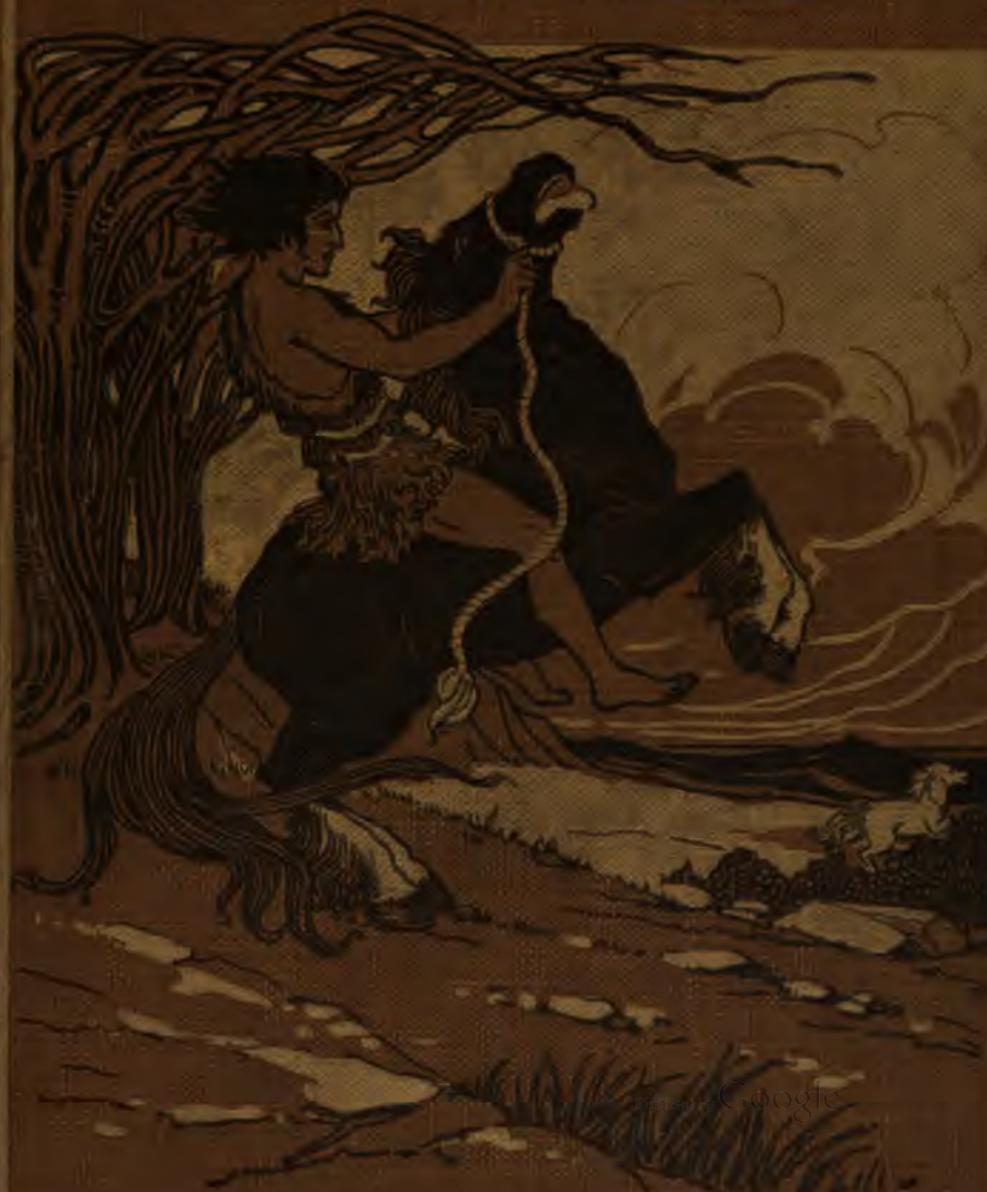
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LONG-AGO PEOPLE



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LONG-AGO PEOPLE



Crafn made pottery with all the skill of his people
—Frontispiece

LONG-AGO PEOPLE

How They Lived in Britain
Before History Began

By
L. LAMPREY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
MAUD AND MISKA PETERSHAM



BOSTON
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1921

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TO
THE BLUEBIRDS

In the beginning, long ago —
When our great-great-great-grandfathers lived, you
know —
There were so many beasts, and reptiles, and birds,
It was altogether too crowded for words!
Wherever man lived, in a hut or a tent,
It was hunt or be hunted, wherever he went.
Nobody dared to be sleepy or slow,
In the beginning, long ago!

The sun that marched through the changing sky
Told them the time as the hours went by.
The earth herself, awake or asleep,
Taught them the seasons to plant and reap.
At cradle and hearth and altar and grave
The crooning wind and the chanting wave
Made all of the songs that they needed to know,—
Our wise wild ancestors, long ago!

With their leaf-shaped flints and their flame-charred
spears
They fought the wolves for a thousand years.
They tamed their land with the mattock and plough,
And gathered their grain in the rick and the mow.
On cliff and heath and scarp and scaur
They left their footprints in peace and war,
And dyke and barrow their wisdom show,—
Our wary wild ancestors, long ago.

In our cities that are so proud and tall
We sometimes think we have learned it all,
But if you could coax from the old green earth
Her marvelous tales of death and birth,
Of the wheel and the plough and the axe and the pen,
Of the taming of beasts and the cunning of men,
She would say they knew some things that we don't
know,
In the beginning, long ago!

INTRODUCTION

THESE tales were begun at "The Bluebird," a summer camp for children of the play age. They are intended to answer some of the questions children are always asking about the doings of primitive man.

As wave after wave of invasion and migration broke upon the shore of Britain, the occupying tribes were sometimes absorbed into the invading race and sometimes driven back into the wilder parts of the country, where they might continue to live, as villages or as families, for thousands of years. Primeval man may have lurked with his stone club in some remote British glen when Roman legions were marching over the Stane Street.

Even people living within a few miles of one another could be centuries apart in development, in a prehistoric age of slow travel and limited means of communication. To this day there are in Britain remnants of lost races, lost kingdoms, lost tribes, owing their physical and mental make-up to customs and conditions that vanished before anything like written records began.

CONTENTS

I.	LITTLE RED HEAD	3
II.	THE HOUSE ON STILTS	17
III.	THE ROUND VILLAGE	29
IV.	THE HOUSE IN THE TREE	40
V.	THE SPRING PLOUGHING	56
VI.	THE FORTUNAT TM PIPKIN	69
VII.	THE STONE OF COVENANT	81
VIII.	TWO TONGUES AND THE WHALE	93
IX.	ALL THE WAY TO CHAR'NG	106
X.	FLINT ARROWS	116
XI.	THE BONFIRE	128
XII.	THE DREAM PATTERN	139
XIII.	THE WEB-FOOTED PEOPLE	150
XIV.	THE GREAT HUNTING	163
XV.	THE WITCH'S SAUCEPAN	177
XVI.	THE PEOPLE WHO CAME	188
XVII.	THE FORERUNNER	196
XVIII.	THE LUCK PIECE	210
	NOTES	223
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	226

ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Frontispiece</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
Crafn made pottery with all the skill of his people	<i>Frontispiece</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
Making Baskets	6	
Machcha picked up his little daughter and set her on his shoulder	7	
The Grinding of the Stone Mills	33	
Listening to Ghost Stories	40	
On the edge of a ruined world, Tua and her children looked back at the wreck	43	
Miti Talked with All the Birds	50	
A Proud Day for Yeru	66	
Trying to Make a Big Pot	74	
Yeru Hoped that Nobody Had Seen Him	84	
Two Tongues Waved a Spear	94	
Kindling a Fire with a Fire-Drill	111	
One of the Flint Men Drawing a Bow	118	
Crossing the Beltane Fire	137	
Spinning in a Tree	140	
Red Head in Her Boat	153	
Right in the Path of the Snake	175	
Finodri and His Saucepan	177	
Watching the People Who Came	190	
Finodri found that taming a wild horse was a very lively affair	203	
Red Head and the Luck Piece	212	

LONG-AGO PEOPLE

I

LITTLE RED HEAD

IT was not a nickname. Ruadha meant Red Head in the language of her people, and it was her real name, the only one she had. Thousands of years ago, before reading and writing were dreamed of, she and her father and mother lived in the wild country that is now Britain.

Red hair was hardly ever found among her people. When her father, a strong and nimble but not very tall man, with a shaggy dark beard that came up on his cheek bones, first saw the downy red-gold head of his little daughter, he said that there was only one possible name for her. She should be Red Head, and Red Head she was.

Ruadha called her father Daddy, but other people called him Machcha,—the man who knows all about fishing. He was the luckiest fisherman anywhere about. He could make the finest bone fishhooks and the strongest lines, and find the best fishing-places. In those days there

were no shops or stores. People had to go out and catch their dinner, or go hungry.

Sometimes Machcha would pretend that the little girl's head was a great wild poppy, and try to gather it; or act as if it were a hot fire, and warm his hands by it. Then there was a frolic all along the pebbly shore. They lived where a little river flowed down to the bay, and at low water there was a nice level beach.

Their family was not exactly like the other families of the neighborhood. Machcha had found his wife, Red Head's mother, on the sea-shore after a great storm. She was almost dead with cold and hunger, or she would have run away, for she was terribly afraid of him at first. She had gray eyes and a great deal of wavy flame-red hair. He was very patient and kind with her, and at last she went with him to his own hut and they were married. Ruadha called her mother Mammy, but Machcha always called her Miria, which meant "My own." All that Miria could tell about herself was that she had gone out in a boat with some of her own people, and the storm had carried them far from shore. When the boat was driven on the rocks and broken all to pieces she lost her senses, and when she waked up she was in a place that she had never seen, and Machcha was bending over her.

By the time Red Head was seven years old, her family had lived in many places and built many homes, which they left to tumble down when they moved away. It does not take very long to build the kind of hut they lived in, and it does not take very long for it to go to pieces when it is deserted. They went wherever the fishing was good and it was comfortable to live. They could make a boat or build a hut out of what they found in the neighborhood. All that they packed up to take away when they moved were fishhooks and spearheads and needles of bone, Machcha's stone axe, and a few ornaments and trinkets they were fond of. The climate was not cold, though it rained rather often. Their clothes were of woven grass, or sometimes of the skins of sea-birds sewed together, with the feathers outside.

In the year that Red Head was seven years old they made their great move. She always knew that it was when she was seven years old, because of the necklace her Daddy had made for her. It was a string of round beads carved from fishbones, and it had four shells, a little bone fish, a striped pebble with a hole through it, and a fish-tooth, all hanging from it like a fringe. Every spring Machcha added some new ornament, and this year it was the tiny bone fish.

This was to bring good luck in fishing. When Red Head was seven years old she could not only catch a fish but make a fishline of the proper kind of grass, by rolling the fiber under her hand, and a fishhook of bone or of wood. Of course, she could weave a net of grass, or make a fish-basket of willow twigs. She had learned those



things when she was still quite small. As for swimming, or paddling a boat, she could hardly remember when she had not known how to take care of herself in the water.

There was a great wind for two or three days that spring; it almost blew away the hut. The



**Machcha picked up his little daughter, and set
her on his shoulder**

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sea came up into the river higher than it ever had come before and spoiled the fishing, for the fishes did not like the brackish and muddy water. Machcha told his wife on the second day to have all their things ready to be put into the boat as quickly as possible, because they might have to move in a hurry.

They did. Before daybreak the family was astir. Machcha picked up his little daughter, and set her on his shoulder, and strode down to the boat where her mother already was arranging their belongings. The moon was struggling through the clouds in a stormy sky, and they could see that the river was rough and full of floating boughs and rubbish.

The boat was not a very big one. It was made of a frame of willows firmly bound together and filled in with rushes woven in and out, basket fashion. A boat of this kind cannot be made very large, because branches that can be bent into shape by hand are not long or big, and to piece the framework would weaken it. After the weaving was done, the boat was painted over with pitchy stuff, and when that dried, it was perfectly water-tight, like a shell. It was woven so closely that it must have floated, even without the pitch, but the water-tight finish would keep the damp from rotting the wood and make it last

longer. Such boats were used in Ireland and some other fishing countries less than a hundred years ago. They are called coracles, and one is sometimes seen in a museum.

There were no rowlocks or rudder, or mast or sail; the boat was moved by paddles, like an Indian canoe. Machcha and Miria each took a paddle, and the small craft slid up-stream. The tide was helping them, for when it came in it pushed the water back up the river for several miles. Machcha meant to get as far as he could up-stream before the tide turned, for he could not paddle against the river current and the ebb tide together, and they might be swept out to sea in spite of all they could do. Red Head sat still as a little frog on the bag of spare clothing and watched.

All that there was to do was to keep clear of the middle of the river, where the bigger masses of wreckage floated, and watch for a little creek or bay where they could anchor. When the tide had begun to turn, Machcha slid along under the bank and threw out the anchor which he had taken care to bring. It was not an iron anchor, for he had never heard of iron. It was not a big stone, for that would have been too heavy for the boat, and on the deep muddy bottom of such a stream as this it would not have taken hold at

all. Machcha used a piece of a small tree trunk with two pairs of branches. First he cut one pair of branches rather short and chopped off the main trunk a little below the place where they started. This made a strong double hook, and to make it heavier he bound a flat stone on it with sinews. He trimmed off the next pair of branches close and cut off the trunk just above them, so that they formed a rough nub around which he could tie a cord; and the other end of this cord he fastened to his boat. He threw out this wooden anchor so that it caught in a tangle of vines and tree roots on the bank, and pulling on the cord he brought the boat close to the shore, so that he could jump out. Then he hauled the boat up alongside a little open place, twisted the rope around a tree and began to get out his fish-lines.

The whole family went fishing at once. Miria had brought burning coals carefully sheltered in a basket lined with mud, and from these she kindled a fire and broiled the fish on sticks as soon as they had caught enough for breakfast. Red Head found some dewberries, and there was some bread left from the last meal in their old home. After breakfast they took a nap, and when the tide was ready to help them again, they went on.

They traveled all that day and part of the next, going ashore to sleep, or eat, or gather fruit. They explored on land a little, but cautiously, because they did not in the least know what kind of people or animals might be there. Once they nearly were stepped on in the middle of the night by an enormous elk coming down to drink. Once they saw in the early morning light something that might have been a dragon flying far above,— but Machcha said it was a huge bird carrying in its claws a big snake.

Toward noon of the second day they came to a place where the river, which had grown much narrower as they pushed up-stream, spread out into marsh and mud and bog, where one could neither paddle, walk nor swim. Machcha did not try to go through this bog. He found a place where they could land. Miria and Ruadha took what was in the boat and carried it on their backs in netting bags, and Machcha carried the boat itself. Then they started to go around the bog and find some other waterway.

They headed for high ground and dry footing, but kept in the edge of the woods so as not to be seen. The hills stood in a circle around the wet hollow, and on the hillside there was a narrow path, dipping down here and climbing there, but never going quite to the top of the hill. If it

had, any one walking along the path would have shown up against the sky, and that was a thing no wild people ever wanted to do. Here was good traveling, and the three went along briskly. They hoped soon to see another river, for they felt safer on the water, and it was a great deal easier to travel in a boat and let the river do the carrying than it was to bear everything on their own backs, up hill and down, on land.

There was a little gap in the hills after awhile, and the track they were following went through it and dipped into another valley. Here was another and rather larger river. Machcha drew a long breath of relief and loaded his boat once more. As they paddled along in the shadow of the overhanging trees, they found that in this river the tide did not push the water back upstream. Machcha let his boat go with the current. He knew that sooner or later they would reach a larger river where the fishing ought to be good.

Toward night they came out in a broad, slow current where the marshes on right and left stretched away into a misty gray distance. Nobody seemed to live there, at all. Machcha could paddle so quietly that if you were three feet away, you could not hear him. He did this now. The little boat floated through the white fog like

a shape of white cloud. In this great river the tide came and went twice a day, as it had in their own river where they used to live. When the tide came in, the marshes were all flooded and looked like a great lake with many islands. When it ebbed there was a big quiet river flowing along between wide, wet, reedy marshes, where the wind blew salt from the sea.

Machcha was a man who noticed things, and after awhile he noticed something curious. A second tide came in after the first one had begun to turn, and it carried his little boat straight on into a great still pool. The wind blew away the mist, and the sunset turned the sky and the waters a splendid red. There were plenty of other boats in the pool. Some were coracles like his own; some were hollowed logs; a few were skin boats, made of the hides of cattle stretched over a framework. None of the men seemed surprised to see him or showed any signs of attacking him. On the left of this pool the land was low and marshy, but on the right a hill rose steeply to a rocky height, and on the top of this there was a building made of logs driven into the earth endwise and set close together.

As Machcha and Miria paddled cautiously past, looking up at the high bank and the people watching them, they saw ahead a deep little river

flowing into the big one. Along the shore of this little stream was a village of huts, built on posts driven into the bank or into the mud, wherever it was firm enough to hold the post upright. These huts were built of small tree trunks and woven branches, and thatched with reeds. Machcha was a man who not only noticed what he saw, but remembered what he had heard. He said:

“ I know where we are. I have heard of this place. I traded with a man who had been here, for that little bone fish I got for the necklace. This man said that the people were of our sort and that they speak our language. I think that this would be a good place to live. We will ask whether we may stay here.”

One of the boatmen hailed him just then. After a little talk, Machcha was allowed to land. Miria and Ruadha took their things out of the boat and climbed the hill, excited and interested. The building on the hill was a temple to the God of the Waters. This God of the Waters, who lived in the great river and ruled the fishing, had been very kind. There was always good fishing in this river, and there were no floods. The people prayed for his protection against storm, starvation, wild animals and sickness. He had been so kind to them that many people were glad to

come and live in their town, and many boats came from far away to trade with them. Because it was a river town with a fortified hill it was called Llyn-dun, for dun, don or down meant a stronghold, and Llyn was one of the words for flowing water.

Red Head thought that life in this new place was going to be very entertaining. She went to sleep listening to the splash of the waters and the calls of the boatmen, and watching the moonlight glimmering on the deep, swift ripples of the river, which was called the Fleet.

II

THE HOUSE ON STILTS

THE first thing that Red Head's father and mother did in Llyn-dun was to build a house. Until this was done they camped in the open air. There were no houses on the Fleet that were fit to live in, except those already full of other families. Nobody took boarders. Nobody had houses to sell or to rent. Each man built his own dwelling to suit himself, and lived in it with his family.

Machcha made ready at once to go into the forest beyond the village and cut the timbers for his house. The trees he would need were not very big ones, and this was well, because he had only a stone axe to cut them with, and he would have to carry them home himself.

“ May I go with you? ” asked Red Head.

“ Yes, ” said Machcha, “ if you will promise to keep where I can see you. There are bears in those woods. Bears! ”

Red Head giggled. She was not a bit afraid

18 THE HOUSE ON STILTS

of bears. Her father had his stone axe, and he could kill a bear in a minute. Besides, he always said "bears" when he told her to keep near him in a strange place, whether or not it was the kind of place where bears came. This was quite an understood thing.

Machcha was chopping away at the trees he had chosen, and Red Head was watching a delightful family of young squirrels, when the mother squirrel gave a warning cry of "Chip-chip-churr-r-rip!" and they all vanished like a blown-out light. There was a man coming up the hill. Red Head took refuge with her father.

"Daddy!" she whispered. "There's a man coming. He's the man they call Two Tongues. Has he really got two tongues? Would he put them out so that I could see them if we asked him, do you think?"

"Um," said her father. The name Two Tongues which the people had given this man meant really "The-man-who-says-one-thing-to-day-and-another-to-morrow," but it was much shorter to call him Two Tongues, and less likely to make him angry. "I wouldn't say anything to him about it just now, I think. You see, little burning-torch-of-curiosity, people who are not like other people are often sensitive about it."

"Um," said Red Head thoughtfully. She

was not at all sensitive about being called Red Head, and she wondered if she ought to be. She sat quite still on a log, her chin in her two little strong, brown hands, watching the stranger.

Two Tongues came up smiling, — an oily and ingratiating smile. (You will see what that is like when somebody smiles in that way at you.) “Can I not help you?” he asked.

“I am going to build a house,” said Machcha. “I suppose you would not care to help in cutting down the trees.”

He thought that the best way to find out whether Two Tongues was in earnest would be to ask him to do real work.

Two Tongues beamed. “The very thing I was about to ask to do,” he said. “If you will lend me an axe I will chop, and you will chop, and there will be two of us to do the work and carry home the logs.”

Machcha had an extra axe which he used only for emergencies, and he lent it to Two Tongues, who began to chop. He chopped so carefully and took so much pains with each stroke, in order not to break the axe, that Machcha was ready to go home before Two Tongues had cut down even one small tree.

“We may as well go,” said Machcha, “for I am in a hurry to get these timbers into place.

20 THE HOUSE ON STILTS

After we have carried them to the place where they belong, you can finish cutting down the tree."

They started down the hill toward the village and went along quite briskly, each man carrying one end of the load. They had to cross a small stream, and in climbing up the bank Two Tongues, who was behind, slipped and fell, and gave a howl of pain. Machcha staggered, for the whole weight coming on his shoulders almost pulled him over. He rested the load on the ground and asked rather shortly:

"What is the matter?"

"Oh! Ow!" cried Two Tongues. "I have broken my leg! I have broken my leg!" And he rocked to and fro and made up faces.

"Nonsense!" said Machcha. "I have seen broken legs enough to know better than that. Get up and come along."

"Oh — ow!" cried Two Tongues. "Perhaps you know best and it is not broken, but it is very badly hurt — ow! ow! I cannot do any more work to-day. Oh! I must go home and get my wife to bathe it with magic herbs steeped in water. Oh! Oh! It is only a little way, and I can go alone. I must not bother you any more. But oh, dear, I dropped your axe in trying to save myself, and it has gone to the bottom. Such

a wise man as you can easily make another, but it was such a beautiful axe! I never saw another like it. Oh—ow! It was surely unlucky that I came to help you. If I had known, I would not have come at all. Ow—ow! my poor leg!"

"Well," said Machcha, "what is done is done, and we will say no more about it. Red Head, suppose you go and stay with your mother. I see her yonder with the women, gathering berries."

Red Head was a little disappointed, but it was very pleasant weather, and she was interested in all that she saw. When her father came toiling home, very hot and tired, with the last of the logs, she snuggled up to him and began to talk fast.

"I know something, Daddy. That man with the two tongues only walked lame as long as you could see him, and then when you had gone away he walked as fast as anybody. I watched when he came to his house, and I heard what his wife said. She said, 'What tricks have you been at this time?' And Daddy, he took something out of his pouch, and I think it was your very best stone axe that you lent him!"

"Um," said Machcha. "Go ask your mother if there is any dinner in the house. If there is

22 THE HOUSE ON STILTS

not, I shall eat you, little Red Apple Full of Sauce, and how will you feel then?"

After dinner they all three set about building the house. Machcha and Miria did the heavy work, and Red Head stood near by to hand things and to see exactly how it was all done, which was most useful for her to know, so that she could build a playhouse for herself.

First one log was set up at each of the four corners of the house that was to be. One of them was driven into the mud and water and the other three into the bank, and Miria held the timbers upright while Machcha hammered them down with a big stone. Then Machcha stood in his boat and Miria on the bank, and they held a crosspiece in place and lashed it hard and fast to the upright posts with strips of wet leather. Sometimes they had used ropes of plaited rushes, but the leather thong was better. They wet it so that it would shrink as it dried and draw the knots very, very tight.

Then they lashed a crosspiece on each of the other sides, and that helped to hold the posts firm. Then Miria and Red Head brought smaller posts and held them while Machcha planted them and drove them firmly into the ground, in a row along the two sides and one end of the house, and lashed them to the crosspieces.

Now the house began to look like a three-sided fence with the open end toward the Fleet. This was to be the door, and they placed it toward the river so that they could come up to their house in a boat.

Then they laid the floor timbers several feet above the ground, so that there was an open space under the floor; and they wove a basket-work floor of osiers and strong reeds that was solid enough to stand on and sleep on. Standing on this they laid the timbers for the roof to rest on, and set up a shorter stake at each end to support the ridgepole, and lashed the ridgepole in place. Machcha braced the roof timbers with shorter pieces. Now all the hardest work was done. They wove branches and reeds in and out of the framework of the sides and end and thatched the roof with big bunches of reed. Machcha built a platform in front of the door, made of heavy logs laid side by side and lashed together like a raft. This was to build a fire on. Clay and mud were daubed over it so that it should not take fire even when the water-soaked logs were dry. When it was all done the little house looked rather like a bird-nest upside down. You can see houses somewhat like it now, in some parts of the Philippines and in New Guinea.

Miria hung a curtain of grass cloth for the

24 THE HOUSE ON STILTS

door and made beds of dry leaves and bundles of grass. The boat was drawn up on the bank, the paddles stood by the door, all the spare tools and spears were hung tidily from pegs in the walls, and the family was at home.

Housekeeping in such a house was simple. When a meal was finished, all bones and oyster shells, and apple cores and nut shells were thrown out into the mud. The birds got some of them, and the rest sank into the mud and helped fill up the river bed. Thousands of years later, people who lived beside that river found the pile of shells and bones and lost needles that dropped through the floor when Red Head was learning to sew, and arrowheads and spearheads and fishhooks and beads and broken dishes, and they called it a Kitchen Midden of the Prehistoric Era. This does not sound like a real live family's affairs at all.

The wise men who know about such things found out so much from the rubbish which the family threw away that they can tell us pretty nearly what happened when the family was alive. We know that they sometimes ate foxes (but not rabbits), and that they had ducks and hens and geese for pets, but did not have large poultry yards. We know what sort of needles they used, and how the women did their spinning and weav-

ing. We know what sort of ornaments they wore, and how they traveled in boats or on foot. Although they had never heard of books, every time they added something to that heap of rubbish they were writing a little more in the history of the family that was to be found and read after a great city had grown up over the ruins of their village and their temple.

The people of the Fleet had ways of doing things which were interesting to Miria and Machcha, and even more interesting to Red Head, because she had all the fun of watching and very little of the work. Miria had always gathered wild apples when they were ripe, but the women here cut them in pieces and took out the core, and dried them, so that they were good to eat for months afterward. There are some of those prehistoric dried apples in a glass case in a museum now.

They showed her also some new ways of cooking. Instead of heating water by dropping hot stones into a closely woven basket, they could make delicious stews in earthen cooking pots. Miria had made bread by rolling dough made of meal and water and salt in a large leaf, and covering it with hot ashes. Here the women made flat cakes and baked them on flat stones heated very hot. These cakes were so dry and crisp

26 - THE HOUSE ON STILTS

that they would keep a long time, and they were easily carried on a journey.

People came from other places to trade with the people of Llyn-dun, so that they had a great many different kinds of things. One of the things they traded most in was jewelry or anything that could be made into jewelry, especially beads. The beads were used for necklaces, armlets, and fringes, or sewed in patterns on mantles, pouches, tunics and petticoats. Some beads were made of clay and painted with paint made of colored earth or bark or roots or leaves. Some were cut out of bone or wood. Some of the strange canoes brought little beads orange colored or silvery white or black or yellow, and lumps of stuff that looked like stone but could be pounded into different shapes with a hammer. Machcha was soon known as a good fisherman and hunter, and gave his wife and daughter many pretty things.

In another way they found living in a town interesting and pleasant. Instead of each family going by itself to get fruit or wild honey or basket material, the people often made up a party to go together. Then every one helped in the work, and every one got a share of what was found. In hunting, the best hunters were chosen to kill the game, and the others helped surround

it and drive it toward them. In this way much more good meat was brought in than could have been obtained in any other way.

The people had begun to do this because it was safer to hunt in company, on account of savage animals or savage tribes. The hunters had been so busy and ranged so far that not many fierce animals were left near the town by the river when Machcha and his family came. It was quite safe for the women to go by themselves to get reeds or osiers or fruit. The neighboring tribes were mostly friendly and liked to trade with the River People. The people of Llyn-dun felt that their God of the Waters had been very good to them.

Red Head often wondered what that kindly god was like. She had never seen a picture of him, of course, for pictures were not painted there. She thought that he must be taller and bigger and older than any of the men, rather like the old chief who had welcomed them when they came. Of course a River God would swim like a salmon, and wear robes all silvery with rainbow lights, like the sunrise on the marsh. On his head he wore perhaps a wreath of the bright marsh flowers, twined with silver and amber beads like the necklace of the wife of their chief. He would have a beautiful spear, all shining and

28 THE HOUSE ON STILTS

sharp, and when he spoke to the fishes they would obey.

Often, when Red Head went fishing, she threw one out of every seven fish back into the river, and she hoped that the River God was pleased. Sometimes, when she was paddling along the bank in her own little coracle that her Daddy had made for her, and the wind was whispering among the tall reeds, she thought she saw the long gray beard and hair of the River God among the ripples in the level sunlight of the evening, and caught the flashing of his spear. It was he, she was quite sure, who sent her her pet duck and told the chief to be kind to her Daddy.

III

THE ROUND VILLAGE

ALONG the chalky trail halfway up the Downs, far from any settlement of their own people, a little company of men, women and children were trotting westward. Below, in the valley, just beyond range of spears or arrows, a pack of wolves loped along in the same direction. Now and then a wolf would stop, sit up on his haunches and sniff the air curiously. It was wolf experience that toward the end of the day men were likely to be tired and grow careless, and that when they had women and children with them they were not hunting. The wolves were hoping that it would soon be supper time. It was easy for them to keep abreast of the travelers above, and they were not very hungry. They could wait.

Dodi, the leader of the wild people, knew very well that the wolves were there, and also why they were there. If he and his men were going slowly it was not because they could not run fast, but because they were in a strange country where all must keep together, with the women

and the little ones in the middle. Every woman and girl had her share of the luggage, and either a child to look after or a clay-lined basket that held coals, covered with ashes, ready for the kindling of fires. They as well as the men could fight, if necessary, but it was not going to be necessary. All the men in that company were young, strong, brave, and provided with weapons. In case the wolves attacked them, the men would take the brunt of it, just as cattle do, when they range themselves with the cows and young calves in the middle of the herd.

Even at the pace they were going, they had come a good many miles since daybreak that morning. In the hillside hut-circle where they had always lived there had come to be too many people. At any rate, that was what Dodi and his two brothers and his sister's husband and his brother's wife's three brothers thought. When there are too many people in a place there are three possible things to do: kill off some of them, make slaves of some of them, or drive some of them away. Dodi and his friends had not been driven out, exactly, but when Dodi explained that once, on a hunting journey, he had seen a place toward the sunset where there were no hut-circles and where nobody seemed to live, the young men and women thought it would be a

very good plan to go there and make a new village, of which Dodi should be chief, and so they had started.

That night they camped in an open place where they could see all round them by the light of the leaping fires. The wolves, very cross and hungry, skulked about awhile in the shadows, then grew tired of waiting for the fires to die down, and went off. Dodi's people were altogether too well trained to be caught in that way. Not a child strayed within reach of a lurking wolf; not a bit of provision was left unguarded.

Toward the end of another day's journey they came to a sunny slope in a "coombe" or dip of the land, and this Dodi said was the place for their village.

First they dug a ditch all around the space where the circle of huts would stand. Cutting through the turf and the top soil they reached the chalk, in which a pit several feet across could be hollowed out without much trouble, by means of the tools they had brought. The ditch would carry off water when it rained, and the earth they dug up was heaped inside the circle to make a dyke or breastwork. All helped to tramp it down until it was almost as hard as stone. Then inside this mound they dug pits for a little group of huts in a circle.

They made their village on the same plan as the one they had left. A burrow through which one crawled on all fours led to a funnel-shaped round hollow cut out of the chalk, with a floor not more than eight feet across. The upper walls of the dwelling, and the roof were of branches interwoven and plastered with clay, and there was a hole in the middle of the cone-shaped roof to let the smoke out when a fire was built inside. After fires had been made several times, the clay became very hard. The house was neither large nor airy, but nobody who had no business in it could get in without a good deal of trouble. That was the main thing to look out for in building a house, according to the ideas of Dodi and his people.

In such a village as this, however, people spent very little time in their houses. Almost all the work was done outside, in the open air, within the sheltering village wall.

Any one passing by a few months later might have thought that Dodi's village had always been there. The men had found a good place to get flints, not very far away, and they spent much of their time in making flint axes, knives, arrow-heads, hide-scrappers, hammers, clubs and spear-heads, and even small saws. Dodi was very clever at flint-working. He could take a lump of

flint and a hammer-stone, and split off flakes just the size he wanted, in just the place he chose.

Flint has been used for weapons and tools by wild men in many countries, because when it breaks, it breaks smoothly in irregular slices, some of which have a sharp edge; and it is hard enough to cut through a man's leg bone. In



making a flint knife or axe, everything depended on striking it just hard enough and in just the right place with the hammer-stone. Sometimes it was shaped and finished with the hammer, but Dodi's people usually ground it to a sharp edge on a grinding-stone, — a flat piece of sandstone.

Dodi's pet grinding-stone had an irregular corner that could be used to grind out a hollow in the flint. Sometimes a hole was made in a wooden handle, and the celt, or shaped stone, was pushed through and fastened in place with raw-hide. When chalk and flint were found together, as they were in this place, it meant good water, stone for weapons, and proper house material.

Of course they did not make everything of the flint. Elk horns made good spades or harpoons, and they used both bone and wood for some of their household utensils.

In fair weather you could have heard all sorts of busy important noises coming from the sheltered ground inside the village wall. There sounded the chip-chip-chip of the flint-knapper, the grinding of the stone millstones where the women, two to each quern, were making wheat or barley or acorns or oats into coarse meal, the barking of the half-savage dogs, the chopping and smoothing of wood, and the lively chatter of people very much interested in their own affairs. Often there were songs to be sung at these different kinds of work, — songs that the workers had learned from the old people, and they from their fathers and grandfathers; songs that told of the First Men. These must never be changed, even by a word.

As his village grew, Dodi found rather to his surprise that he began to feel more kindly toward his uncle and his own people. He found himself wanting to make this village in every way just like the one he had left. He often found that some wise saying of the men who were old when he was a little boy came into his mind and gave him the wisdom he needed in ruling his village.

The doors of the village all faced east, to get the first rays of the sun, and there was a rule against putting out a fire or trampling cinders. Dodi saw the usefulness of these rules, now that he was head man himself.

One day when the leaves were just beginning to turn yellow and brown, he needed all the wisdom he had, for the hunters came in with bad news. They had been attacked and chased by the Tree People, and every one of them had been hit somewhere by an arrow. These Tree People had run away from the neighborhood when Dodi's people came, because they feared the flint arrows and the long spears with their sharp, leaf-shaped stone points. They made their own spears sharp and tough by charring the sharpened end in the fire. Now they were coming back to their old hunting ground, and they seemed to object to strangers.

The Tree People would hardly be likely to try

to destroy the village, but they could make the life of the villagers very uncomfortable and unsafe. They could flit about among the trees like shadows or like weasels, and their women fought as well as the men. Dodi's people had begun to clear land and plant grain at a little distance from the Round Village, and if they were to be picked off by arrows and spears thrown from the shelter of the forest they could not work there at all. Without their grain and the game and fish the hunters brought in, they would starve.

All that winter the people of the Round Village had to be on guard, night and day. When they least expected it there would be trouble with the nimble, crafty, thievish Tree People. They never knew how many of the Tree People they succeeded in killing or wounding, because the enemy would not come out into the open in any numbers. They always kept within reach of the trees, and to chase them back in the forest would simply mean that whoever went in would never come home.

There was a strip of woodland half covering the hill on which the Round Village was built, which had been very convenient for firewood and building material, but it also provided very convenient shelter for the Tree People. If the wood could be cleared away, life in the village would be

safer. Dodi puzzled over the thing for months. At last he hit on a plan.

He set all the fighting men to getting their weapons in order. He told them to take care that their fire-sticks and dry moss and punk were also ready for instant use. They could make a fire in a few minutes by twirling a fire-stick around in a little hole in another stick, by means of a twisted cord.

Dodi thought that if he could make the Tree People afraid of his people, they would keep to their own country and not bother him any more. It had been very dry all the last part of that summer, and he finally decided the time was ripe for his plan. Early one morning, when the sun was just about to rise, he led his troop out of the gate of the village. He knew that the Tree People were massing in the woods again, and he kept out of reach of their arrows at first. He also knew, for he had learned it in many running fights, that the Tree People did not act together and according to a plan. Each fought for himself, without any leader or orders.

Each of Dodi's men had a bundle of dry reeds or grass and some live coals in a clay-lined basket. They spread out in a long, open line, dividing so that half were on one side of the strip of woods and half on the other. Just as the sun rose

they all shouted together and raced toward the trees with their bundles of straw ablaze. In a twinkling, the underbrush was afire in a dozen places around the woods where the Tree People were hiding. They were hemmed in by a ring of fire.

The Tree People were taken altogether by surprise. They knew the use of fire, but it had never entered their heads that any one could use it in war. Some of them fought their way out, like desperate wildcats. Some broke through the part of the woods where the belt of flame was thinnest and fled. Some crept to Dodi's feet and surrendered. These Dodi adopted into the village as servants. They were greatly amazed at not being killed. Usually, in their wars, prisoners were killed, and they had surrendered only because it was better to be shot or speared than to be burned to death in the woods. But the people of the Round Village had a great deal of work to be done and needed slaves.

Dodi saw that one of the families which had surrendered had a daughter, slim and bright-eyed, and very clever at basketwork, and finding wild bees' nests, and other things. Her name was Tua. The oftener Dodi looked at her, the more glad he was that he had not killed his prisoners. He had no wife — when he had left his

old home the girl he wanted had married another man — and before the summer was over he had made Tua his wife, and the little forest woman was the richest matron in the Round Village.

After this there were no more fights with the Tree People. The burning of the woods settled it. Tua told her husband that berries would be thick next summer on the cleared land, and so it happened. In many ways Dodi found that she could help him in this new country. Through her he learned where the beavers built, and what healing herbs grew in the forest, and when the deer and the elk come and go. He was very well content. If Tua were not, she never said so; and there was no doubt, as her mother told her, that it was far better to be the wife of a strange chief than to be knocked on the head.

IV

THE HOUSE IN THE TREE

A GREAT many people have lived in holes in the ground, for one reason and another, and some people like it. Dodi, the head man of his hut-circle, did. The very



first thing that he could remember was sitting curled up close to his mother on the ground beside the fire, listening to ghost stories that the old

people told. If there had not been a strong roof overhead, and if the walls that shut the little family snugly in had not been of the solid earth itself, those ghost stories would have sounded much worse than they did. But the little firelit hole was so bright and warm that everything in it could be plainly seen. There were only two openings in that house. One was the hole in the roof where the smoke went out, and the other was the round burrow that led to the outer entrance. A ghost could not come through the roof because the smoke would make him cough. The other hole was guarded by Dodi's father who sat beside it, spear and club within reach; and it had a thorn bush drawn across it, besides.

In a hole all one's things are safe and where they can be seen. There is no danger in holes. The entrance can be made so small that an enemy can come in only on his hands and knees. When his head appears inside it can be whacked. A hole is certainly the only safe and proper home. So thought Dodi.

Tua, his wife, did not agree with him, but she said nothing about it, because she thought that Dodi might beat her if she did not like what he liked. Although she was only a woman of the Tree People who had been taken in battle, Dodi treated her very well, according to his ideas. He

42 THE HOUSE IN THE TREE

gave her enough to eat, and warm clothing to wear, and a necklace with a charm stone hung from it. She never objected to anything he did, and did all that he told her to do, so that he had no reason to beat her. Their house was the largest and best furnished of all the houses in the hut-circle. In hunting, Dodi always could make the best flint spearheads and knives, and Tua could tell him where and when to look for game in the new country to which he had come. They had two children, a boy and a girl. Yeru the boy and Miti the girl were slim and bright-eyed and active like their mother, and strong and silent like their father. Dodi never talked much about what he thought or felt or meant. He waited until he was ready to do things, and then he did them.

One night, for some reason or other, Tua could not sleep. At last she rose silently, and went out into the moonlight, and stood there looking about her. She moved so quietly that not even the sharp ears of the dogs heard her. All the hut people were asleep except herself. The Round Village was built on the side of a hill,—a little hill just across the river from a mountain. Tua could hear curious rumblings in the mountain. There had been heavy rains lately, and the little river that ran through the valley was in flood. Tua was uneasy. She felt



**On the edge of a ruined world, Tua and her children
looked back at the wreck**

that she would like to run away if she only knew where to run.

Then the rumbling turned to a crash and a roar, and Tua knew that something terrible was going to happen. She dived into the hut and caught up the children, who clung to her like little monkeys; Dodi, half asleep, grabbed his spear and stumbled after her. Like a deer Tua sprang over the wall and raced toward the shelter of the woods on the other side of the hill. They were not thick woods, hardly more than underbrush and saplings, but to her they meant safety.

She had hardly got clear of the village before a piece of the mountain broke off and slid down and blotted it out and filled up the river channel below. Three little figures, alone, on the edge of a ruined world, Tua and her children looked back at the wreck. Dodi was nowhere to be seen. The water was pouring over the mass of earth and trees and rocks, and it looked as if the people who were not smothered by the earth that had fallen upon the village would be drowned in their holes when the river reached them. Tua took refuge in a tree. That was the safest place she could think of.

Wolves, and bears, and hyenas, and wild hogs, and the woolly rhinoceros, and the cave tiger did not climb trees. Snakes could, but Tua had her

46 THE HOUSE IN THE TREE

knife and her fire-stick in her pouch, and she was not much afraid of snakes. They stayed in the tree until morning. Tua could sleep comfortably in a tree if she liked, and she had an arm around each child.

In the morning she saw no signs of Dodi or his people, but she did see two strange warriors coming over the hill. She slid down from her tree and fled farther into the woods, heading toward the wilder forest where she had a faint hope of finding some of her own people. She wanted nothing to do with any of the people of the hut-circles, if Dodi were dead.

It was late spring when the landslide happened. The berries were beginning to ripen and the birds' eggs were plentiful. Before night Tua and her children had traveled many miles, but still they saw no Tree People nor any signs of them. The fact is that the Tree People had been so thoroughly scared by the strangers with the flint arrows and spears that they had gone away from that part of the country altogether, but Tua did not know that. She and her children and the wild animals had the region all to themselves.

When she was clear away from the open country she went to work at once to make a sling and a throwing spear. With the precious flint knife

which Dodi had made for her she cut a stick of the right size and straight as a sunbeam; and she set Yeru to stripping the bark with his small knife, the first he had ever owned, which his father had made for him. She made cord of the inner bark of the linden. Yeru could already use a sling very cleverly. Miti was so little that she could be easily carried and so strong that she could cling fast to her mother's back. Mother and son hunted together, and if Yeru could not do anything else he headed off the game or helped to carry it.

“Mother,” said Yeru on their second night in a tree, “where are we going to live?”

“I do not know,” said Tua.

“Can you dig a hole for a house?”

“I don't want to.”

“When it rains we shall be cold.”

“Before it rains we will have a house.”

“There are no holes in the ground here.”

“There are plenty of trees,” said Tua. “We will live in a tree.”

Tua had never told her children much about the Tree People. She knew that Dodi meant to bring up his family in a hut-circle, and she did not suppose he would want them to know anything about the Tree People, whom he had made his slaves. Yeru did not know just what it would

48 THE HOUSE IN THE TREE

be like to live in a tree, but he had noticed that his mother always could do whatever had to be done, and he thought if she said they could live in a tree, they probably could.

On the next day Tua found a good place for her house. The tree that she chose was not a giant, but it was quite large, and its branches were level and well arranged. She cut and twisted off a branch or two so as to make a hollow in the thick leafy mass, and she cut bundles of grass and rushes, and willow shoots and saplings. She could not have cut any large tree with her little knife, but she did not need any for the kind of house she meant to build.

She tied the saplings to the boughs of the tree so as to make the framework of a roundish cage with the trunk of the tree at the back. She wove willows in and out of this framework, and reeds to fill in the spaces and bind the willows together more firmly, and she thatched the roof with bundles of grass. As for the floor, she did not trouble herself much about that. She wanted a shelter that would keep off the rain and wind and make a safe hiding place for themselves and their provisions. The thick foliage almost hid her tiny tree-house from any one who was not looking for it. She made baskets to hang from the edge of the roof inside and hold food. She made a bas-

network cradle for the baby to sleep in. She made a round basket lined with earth to keep fire in, and kept a supply of torches ready in case any wild animal came along and had to be frightened off. She taught Yeru not only how to use the fire-stick but how to make one, for that knowledge might some day save his life.

When the little house was all done, and Tua curled herself up to sleep there with the children close beside her, she drew a long, peaceful breath.

At last she could sleep again in the fresh air, with the soft wind cooling her drowsy eyelids, and the scent of the dewy out-of-door world to make all her dreams happy ones. Nothing but the dark was between her tiny house and the big free sky, with its far-away twinkling lights and great white moon. She could hear the leaves talking together in the stillness, and the call of some fearless night-bird far away among the trees. The little wild mother chuckled in sleepy content.

Yeru wriggled his toes, yawned and snuggled closer to her.

“I like this, mother,” he said. “I like it much better than the village.”

“Coo-coo-coo!” murmured Miti sleepily. She had learned that from the pigeons calling all day long in the tree tops.

50 THE HOUSE IN THE TREE

They lived in their tree-house all summer. By day they ranged the forest, taking to the trees at any sign of danger, filling light baskets and pouches, woven of grass, with anything they found that they could use,—nuts, wild grain, acorns, fruits, roots, with now and then a bone



or a bit of hard wood that could be made into some tool. Tua had learned a good many new ways while she lived among the village people, and she did not forget them now. When she found a piece of flint that would do for an axe she fastened it into a cleft stick with a leather thong, as she had seen Dodi do. Yeru grew

taller and stronger every day, and Miti talked with all the birds in their own language.

Tua had no idea where she was, or how far she had come. All her exploring gave her no glimpse or sign of her own people. She knew that cold winds would come some day and sweep the forest, and she saved the skins of the animals they killed, from which to make garments. There were rabbit skins, and fox pelts, and beaver skins, and marten skins, and bird skins. Miti, sitting in her basket-cradle, dressed in a little close feather tunic, looked like a new kind of large baby bird. Yeru and his mother wore fur garments that left the right shoulder bare and the legs free to run or climb. A strip of rawhide fastened them at the waist and held a fur pouch that served for a pocket. They were too active to need any very heavy wraps. They could run barefoot through snow without being frostbitten. Tua used fire for cooking and for protection rather than for warmth. She built her fire on the ground for cooking, but she always had food stored in her tree-house in case of need, for she never knew when some large wild beast might come prowling about, or when hunters from some strange tribe might pass that way.

When the leaves had begun to fall they had

52 THE HOUSE IN THE TREE

been away one day for a longer hunting trip than usual and were coming home, racing with the long tree-shadows, when they heard a wolf howl behind them. A pack of wolves had winded them. This was serious. Now Yeru was truly glad that he had helped his mother pack the baskets in their tree-house with nuts and dried fruit and meat dried in little strips. They reached their house just before the wolves caught up with them. The savage gray animals sat down to wait under the tree.

In their experience men always came down from a tree sooner or later. Either they would come down to get something to eat, or they would go to sleep and fall off the branches. The wolves would wait. They sat and looked up at the tree and grinned cheerfully.

But Tua and her children curled themselves up as usual and went to sleep. They knew that the wolves could not climb, and they had food enough stored up there for days and days. As for water, Tua had taken care of that. She could swing herself from tree to tree until she reached one which overhung a deep pool in a mountain stream, let down a little bucket made of bark, with a stone to weight it, and get water at any time. Yeru had often lain along the bough of that tree and fished for trout. If men

appeared with dogs, Tua had planned to drop into the stream and run away with the water, where scent would not stay.

Morning came and found the wolves still waiting, and getting rather tired and cross. Yeru would have liked to throw his axe at one, but his mother would not let him. She kept that axe under her own hand. Yeru could only stand on a bough and yell little songs of war and defiance at the wolves, and tell them what he would do when he was a man.

Then a new danger threatened. Tua hushed the children, flattened herself against the branches and lay still. Men were coming at a quick pace through the forest, on the track of the wolves.

Tua dared not leave the tree for fear they would see her, and she knew that the hunters would come to find out what it was that the wolves were watching. Before the fierce beasts knew what was coming, they were struck by a flight of flint spears, thrown with the sure aim of experienced fighters.

It was a splendid fight. Scared as she was, Tua could not help admiring the skill and strength and courage of the squat, broad-shouldered, shaggy men. When it was all over, three big wolves lay dead on the ground, two more

54 THE HOUSE IN THE TREE

were wounded and helpless, and the others had run away.

“Huh!” said one of the men, looking up. “Woman. And boy. And baby.”

“Huh!” said another, coming under the tree and looking up. “Tua!”

It was Dodi!

Tua thought it must be his ghost, until she had dropped to the ground and felt of him. The landslide had caught him, as it had the other people in the village, but as he was outside the hut he had been swept down into the water and carried far down-stream,—so far that he had found himself in a strange country. He had believed that Tua was dead, and she could not help seeing that he was glad to find her and the children alive.

“I have been living with some of your people,” said Dodi, “in a tree-village.”

“I did not know that you could ever live in trees,” said Tua.

“Neither did I,” said Dodi, “but they were kind to me, and when one is all alone among strange people, one is glad to do as they do and keep alive.”

The two looked at each other.

“Come with me and we will find a house,” said Dodi.

“This is our house,” piped up Yeru.

Dodi looked at it.

“Do you like this kind of a house?” he asked.

“I thought that you would not be happy without a house like the other women. I was the head man of the village. Now I have no village, but I can build you a house.”

“In a hole?” asked Yeru. “It is better in a tree.”

“The village is better in winter,” said Tua.

“We will go with you.”

But every summer, when the birds began to build nests, Dodi and Tua lived in the forest. They found a home in another village, but it was a village where the people lived in huts instead of holes, and kept sheep on the Downs.

V

THE SPRING PLOUGHING

YERU lay along the bough of an old oak tree at the edge of the wood, hugging the bough closely. Any one looking up from under the tree would not have seen much but his rough, dark fleece of hair and bright inquisitive eyes. He was a boy who liked to watch whatever was going on, and he had found that it was often easier to do this from a tree. Also it was easier to get away, if any one did not like his being there. Yeru had come from the farther end of the wood, half a mile away, without once touching his hard, brown foot to the ground. He had left home just before sunrise, and the sun was now about halfway to the top of the sky. His father would be angry because the boy was not home to help dig in the fields, but to tell the truth, that was why Yeru had come away. It was a beautiful morning in the beginning of the warm weather, and there were many things to see in the world.

He had never seen anything in the least like what he was watching now. The people out in

the open were doing something which interested him greatly.

Some distance away, on the hillside, a village sat inside its earth wall. Yeru had never been as near as this to it before. He had heard the lowing of the shaggy, long-horned, creamy-white cattle which belonged to the people of the village, and had seen them from a distance, pasturing on the hillside and guarded by the herdsmen. He had fished and hunted all up and down this valley, and noticed that in many ways the people were like the people of his own village. In that part of the world the people usually settled on the upper slopes of river valleys, because the lowlands were often impassable marsh and almost always flooded once or twice a year. It was safer, drier and sunnier on high ground. But the lowlands held richer pastures and better ground for cultivating. So the villagers built their homes within the earth wall, and the pasture lands and the grain lands which belonged to the village were located wherever the soil was good for cattle or for grain. That was much the best plan for any village to follow in those days. If men had settled by themselves, each on a farm of his own, enemies could have taken all that they had and killed the family, or carried off as slaves those they did not slay.

58 THE SPRING PLOUGHING

Yeru knew all this very well. In his own village there was a day every spring when the head man called all the heads of families together for the casting of lots. The common grain-land was divided into equal parts, and each man was given one strip, but not the same strip every year. Not all the land was dug up every year. One third was always left to rest; the next year, another third was left untilled, and the next year, another. The part that was not dug up grew up to clover and vetches and weeds. Wise men have found out that clover, beans, peas, vetches and some other plants have a way of getting food out of the air and leaving it in the earth, so that the ground is richer where they have grown, but people in Yeru's time did not know of that. They did know, however, that the land wore out if all of it was used every year, and they thought, also, the gods of the land were better pleased when men were not too greedy.

The casting of the lots was to decide which strip each man should have. Each head of a family brought an apple marked with his own private mark, — an arrow, a fishhook, a cross, or some such figure. Yeru's father, Dodi, marked his with a leaf-shape like the celts, or flint spear-heads he made. All of the apples were put into a round basket, while one man was sent clear

away from the place so that he could not tell which apple any man cast into the basket. Then this man was called back. He took the basket and began quickly to take out the apples and place them one by one in a row. The man who owned the apple at the end of the row — the first one taken out — had the first strip of land; the man owning the next apple was given the second, and so on. In some villages twigs were marked and used instead of apples. After each man had accepted his lot, they all went to work to dig up and plant and hoe and reap their land, and next spring the man who got the poorest lot this year might find himself the luckiest man in the village.

But that was not what these people Yeru was watching were about. They had come out of their village gate in a procession, singing and carrying long chains of flowers, and driving a team of eight white oxen harnessed to a queer clumsy contrivance with a three-cornered knife, or spade, or tooth underneath. Yeru's people used spades of wood or of elk horn, and they possessed no cattle. They hunted wild horses sometimes, but merely because they liked horse meat.

The procession was heading straight for the wood in which Yeru lay hidden. It would go

60 THE SPRING PLOUGHING

along the edge of the wood to the tilled land, which was divided into strips of about an acre each. Here and there were little corners and bits of land left to grow up to weeds, but Yeru's people did the same with their lots. The waste bits were no man's land. They were left for the elves and spirits of the woods and fields, who might be angry if they were driven out of their old homes altogether. They made good places for birds to nest in and where snakes and toads might live. As the people of those days did not know anything about insect poisons, it was well for them that birds, toads and snakes were at hand to eat up the grubs and worms and bugs in the fields.

Yeru thought they would stop now for the casting of lots, but they did not. It seemed to him that the piece of land they had to dig up was very large indeed. He kept stiller than ever on his bough, for fear that if they saw him they would catch him and make him help, and that would be worse than the task from which he had run.

The men brought the eight great oxen up to the first strip of land, with shouting and singing and jesting, and then each man seemed to take a prearranged place. Some grasped the thing the oxen were hauling; some guided the great beasts;

others stood and looked on. What on earth were they going to do now?

“Ya-hu! Ya-ho! Haw! Woo-sh!” The oxen hauled slowly but mightily, straining in their harness amid the shouts of their drivers. The men holding the handles of the heavy wooden thing Yeru did not understand went trampling cheerily on, bearing down so that the knife-like blade cut deep into the fruitful hillside soil. On and on it went, cutting and turning the earth as three men could never have done with a spade, and when it reached the end of the strip it turned and came back. The strip was just a furrow long, — we call it a furlong.

The eight-ox plough made short work of that strip. The oxen and the men working together did that day, with song and laughter, what many more men could not have done in many days with the spade alone. Moreover, the plough went deeper than any spade, and that was good for the land, as Yeru knew, for his father had told him so. It seemed to him that if he were to live in a village always he would like to live in this one.

But what about the men who had no oxen? What happened to their land? Yeru could see that there were many more than eight men, and more than eight strips of land, but in the end all were ploughed.

62 THE SPRING PLOUGHING

When the ploughing was finished, and the shadows were slanting from the trees over the new-turned sod, and birds were picking up astonished angleworms along the deep brown furrows, Yeru slid down from his tree and warily picked his way toward the village. The people seemed to be having a feast, and he had some fish in his creel.

“Ho!” said a voice. He saw coming toward him a boy of about half his own age, wearing a short leather tunic. They stopped and looked at each other.

“Ho!” said Yeru.

“What are you doing here?” asked the strange boy.

Yeru made up his mind. “I have a gift for the head man,” he said, pointing to his fish basket.

“I’m his son,” explained the other. “My name’s Thode. It is the feast of the ploughing. You come with me.”

The fish were still wet and fresh, and just what Thode’s grandfather liked. Like many old men he was glad to talk about old customs when he found a boy who wanted to hear. Yeru asked him all the questions he had been aching to ask about the ploughing and the customs of the village.

The men who owned oxen were the big men of the village, and the one who owned the leading yoke was called ploughman. He had the first and best strip of land. The second strip went to the man who owned the ploughshare, the third to him who owned the outside sod-ox; the fourth to him who owned the outside sward-ox; the fifth to the driver, and the others, all but one, to the men who owned the other oxen. The last piece was kept to pay for the repairs and care of the plough. All the land was ploughed alike by the great common plough and the eight oxen, but the best land belonged to the men who owned the oxen and did the work. Every year a little more of the hillside was ploughed and sown. Every year there was a little more grain for the village when harvest time came. Even the poorest man in the village of the Ploughing People lived better than the head men in other villages which had no cattle.

On the way home, Yeru did a good deal of thinking about what he had seen. He had to take a whipping for running away, and he had to do his work just the same, but all the time that he was digging up the tough sod with his elk-horn pick, under the hot sun, he kept thinking about the Ploughing People and their eight-ox plough. He told his mother all about it, but she

64 THE SPRING PLOUGHING

could not see any way for the people of their village to get cattle and a plough, even if they wanted them. The Ploughing People had always had such things, she supposed.

That summer Yeru was fishing away up the river several miles from home, in flooded low-lands where the knolls stood up like islets here and there. He was just thinking that it was about time for him to be paddling home, when he heard a queer noise. It came from one of these islets where the bushes had their feet in the muddy ripples of the flood water, and it sounded very small and young, and weak and frightened. Yeru paddled up to the bushes to see what made the noise.

He found there a little calf, white with a black irregular star on its forehead, bleating with cold and hunger and fright. It must have been carried down with the flood from somewhere among the hills, nobody knew where. The village where Yeru had watched the spring ploughing was farther down-stream and quite out of the way of the waters.

Yeru's mind was made up in a trice. That calf should be his.

But the question was how to get it home. His shaky dugout would never hold both himself and the calf. The little creature could not walk, and

although Yeru's strong shoulders would have been quite equal to carrying it if he could have gone home by land, mud and marsh stretched on both sides of the river just there. Yeru thought awhile.

Then he tied the legs of the calf with twisted rushes so that it could not get up, and laid it in his canoe, and covered it with his tunic. Slipping into the water he swam along, pushing the dugout with one hand.

It was hard work, but by and by he caught a floating log and got astride of it, and towed his own skiff after him, paddling vigorously. It was long after dark when he reached his own hut, and great was the surprise of his family when he walked wearily in with the calf on his back.

It seemed for a day or two as if the little foundling would die, after all, but Tua had a knack with young creatures, and the calf slowly grew stronger, until it could stand on its funny awkward legs, and eat grass, and butt at the children when they played together. As the calf grew, Yeru spent much time working at a contrivance which was as nearly in the style of the eight-ox plough as he could make it, but much smaller.

Nobody had thought, at first, of the calf ever

66 THE SPRING PLOUGHING

being anything but a pet. When Spot, as they called him, grew bigger than any pet could be expected to, something was said about his being killed some day for a grand feast. But Yeru had another idea in his mind.

There was a surprise waiting for him, how-



ever, when he tried to harness Spot to the plough. Yeru had had an idea that one of the animals of the Ploughing People would take naturally to ploughing, just as a cat takes to catching mice, but Spot did not appear to like the idea of work any better than Yeru himself did. It was a long and puzzling job to break the little steer to harness, especially as the boy had no idea how such a thing was usually done, and the whole family

took a hand in it, first and last. It was a proud day for Yeru when Spot walked out on the hill-side in his red harness, dragging the plough, and turning to right or to left, according to Yeru's command. Tua had coaxed her husband to let the boy try that way of breaking up some new ground before any promises were made about sacrificing Spot on the next feast day.

Yeru's heart was pounding as he took hold of the plough handles and prepared to drive his first furrow. Miti was driving the steer, who knew her and minded her very well, and Yeru began to plough.

Now came another surprise. The plough acted as if it were bewitched. It twisted and skewed and hopped and did everything but behave as a proper plough should. Instead of the fine, straight, deep trench of Yeru's dreams, it made a track as crooked as a worm, hardly scratching the turf in places. Still Yeru hung to the plough handles and bore down with all his might, and Spot kept on dragging the plough and jerking it and the boy from side to side among the tough grass tussocks.

Then a pair of big, strong hands was laid on the plough handles, and Yeru heard his father say, "Let me hold it, son. You are not strong enough or heavy enough for this work."

68 THE SPRING PLOUGHING

Yeru was glad to let go the handles and get his breath. Although it was not very easy work even for Dodi, he managed to run a fairly straight furrow on the first attempt. But on the second, the plough broke, and they had to give it up for that day. Dodi hunted up a tough piece of root that was about the right shape, and made another, and after that Spot did the ploughing of their strip of land. The next year some of the other men of the village became interested in this new way of turning the soil, and in time there was another village of the Ploughing People, and more cattle grazed in the hillside pastures.

A few of the old men grumbled at the new fashion, and told how, when they were boys, they worked all day long for many days with the pick and the spade when the first fields were broken up. The boys, however, liked the new way a great deal better. So did the women, for now there was plenty for all to eat, and besides the good grain for bread, there was milk for the children, and meat on feast days, and a new kind of food which almost everybody liked, called cheese, made of the milk from the gentle white cows. Cowhide was good also for tunics and bed coverings, and had many other uses. The village would not have given up its herd of cattle now for anything.

VI

THE FORTUNATE PIPKIN

AMONG the hills of the west country there is a place where the earth is sticky. It did not suit the Tree People who roamed the forest, the Flint People who herded sheep, or the Ploughing People who tilled the soil. The thick, sour, clayey land was not what they wanted. The people of the clay banks had their own ways and songs and stories, and their own work, which was pottery.

Weena, the wife of Burosli the master potter, used to tell her little son Crafn about the father of all potters, the first Burosli, the first man who dwelt in their valley. To the end of his life Crafn remembered exactly how the story went, and he could see in his mind his mother deftly twirling the bit of clay which was going to be a cup in a minute, and telling him once again the story of the First Potter.

This was the story:

“A long time ago, when all talk was new and the birds and animals could speak, the Old One

70 THE FORTUNATE PIPKIN

who ruled the land called to him his seven sons. He sat on the great cliff under the sunset and divided the land among them.

“To the eldest he gave the mountain and the secret of making the bonfires on the heights.

“To the second he gave the pastures and the skill to make flint weapons to protect the sheep from the wolves.

“To the third he gave the forest and the understanding of the ways of beasts and birds which are hunted.

“To the fourth he gave the river and the wisdom to make boats to run upon the water.

“To the fifth he gave the seashore and the knowledge of making nets to take fish.

“To the sixth, whom he loved, he gave all the land that is fit for the planting and the harvest.

“When each had thanked him and departed, he turned around, and there was Burosli the youngest, playing with a lump of earth.

“‘Hey!’ he said. ‘I forgot that I had still one more son. What shall I do, for I have given away all the land and water to your brothers?’

“Burosli fingered his ball of earth and said nothing.

“‘Perhaps one of them will have you for his servant,’ said the Old One. Then he called to the Brother of the Mountain where the fire blos-

somed on the height and said, 'Here is Burosli your brother, who has no home; will you take him to live with you?'

"But the eldest brother said that he could not trust any one else with the fire-stick.

"Then the Old One called to the Brother of the Downs who came by with his sheep, but the second brother said that the sheep would not know the voice of a stranger.

"The Brother of the Forest said that Burosli would scare all the game. The Brother of the River said that there was no room for him in the boat. The Brother of the Seashore said that Burosli could not swim and would drown in the waves. The Brother of the Plough said that he had no grain to spare.

"'What can you do, my son?' asked the Old One. 'There is neither land nor water for you, and every man must have a home. There is no work left for you, and all men must work.'

"Burosli held out the pot which he had made from the lump of earth. 'Father,' he said without fear, 'give me always a lump of earth to play with, and I shall be content.'

"The Old One looked at the pot with the good-luck signs upon it, and he saw what was in Burosli's heart and was glad. He saw that here was a son like himself, who could live without

72 THE FORTUNATE PIPKIN

gifts, and work without being told, and make things which he had not seen before. He set his foot down among the hills, and when he lifted it up there was water in the footprint.

“ ‘My son,’ he said, ‘wherever you find my footsteps upon the earth there will be a place for you, with neither land nor water but both together, and so long as you live there you can play with the earth.’ Then he went away to his own place and talked with the sun, moon and stars.

“ Burosli played all day long with the earth, making cups, and bowls, and jars, and jugs, and pots to hold things, and setting them in the sun to dry. At first his brothers jeered at him for his ill fortune, but by and by they came to look at what he made.

“ ‘This jar will hold water, which I have to carry up the mountain,’ said the eldest brother. ‘I will give you fire for payment.’

“ ‘This bowl is very good to hold meat,’ said the second brother. ‘I will give you a sheepskin for it.’

“ ‘This jug will hang upon a tree to hold honey-wine,’ said the third brother. ‘I will give you a haunch of the deer to pay.’

“ ‘This pot is just the thing to pack away dried fruit in, for trading,’ said the fourth brother. ‘I will pay you in beads.’

“‘This platter is what I need for the salt that I make from the sea and dry in the sun,’ said the fifth brother. ‘I will make payment in salt, which all men use.’

“‘This cup with a lid like a little roof is what I want for the seed-wheat, the good grain which must be kept safe,’ said the sixth brother. ‘You shall have a share in the harvest.’

“Thus Burosli had all that the others had to eat and drink and wear, although he did nothing but play with the earth. So long as men eat and drink, so long will there be potters.”

Crafn knew this story so well that he could almost see the Old One, seated on the level ground that broke the hill slope halfway down, parceling out the land while Burosli dreamed over his bit of clay. He was glad that Burosli’s share was this valley which was like the track of a great foot. In the village the people made not only jars, bowls, jugs, pots, platters, and cups, but flasks to carry liquid in, pipkins for cooking, toy figures, and covered jars shaped like the round, cone-roofed huts, to hold the offerings of grain and other things buried with the dead. There were songs to be sung in shaping each of these, and Weena knew them all. Crafn was hardly more than a baby when he learned to shape and work the clay.

74 THE FORTUNATE PIPKIN

There were no potters' wheels in those days, and small dishes were molded in the hands. Larger ones were made either by coiling a strip of clay round and round, building the sides up in basket shape, or by pressing the clay into shape inside a basket, which left a pattern of



woven reed when the dish was dry. In making jugs and flasks one hand was kept inside to smooth the inner surface.

Patterns were marked out with the finger, a stick, a shell, a nut, a string, or a net, on the soft clay. A skilful potter could mold a little ornamental band around the pot, turning it on the palm, or paint it in patterns. The finest work

was usually done on small pots not more than six inches high. It was hard to make large ones, and they broke easily. Even for cooking, baskets were more generally used. It was troublesome to heat the water with stones, but it was better than having a dinner-pot break with dinner in it.

Crafn liked making pots, but he wished they lasted longer. When he thought of spending his whole life making things sure to break in a season or two, he felt rather doleful.

Another fault in the pottery was that it was not quite waterproof. Water set away overnight soaked through and wasted away. But when Crafn spoke of these things, his father was angry.

“Where will you find better pots than ours?” asked Burosli the master potter. “What if they do not last forever? No one complains of that. If you do not like our work, you may go and look for wisdom elsewhere.”

Crafn went. He had no trouble in making a living, for he could make pots worth buying, even of the poorest clay. He found no clay, however, so good as that of his own valley, and after a year and a day he began to think of going back. But he wandered into a deep forest where he lost his way. As he sat by a spring, munching his last bit of food, a girl came out of the

bushes with a pipkin upon her shoulder. The pipkin looked like no other that Crafn had seen. It was of brown coarse ware, but the handle was creamy-white, molded of a smoother clay, in the shape of a long-necked bird bending its head to drink from the rim of the jar.

The girl said that her name was Dori, daughter of Natan the potter, who lived not far off. Crafn was glad to hear this, for he had expected to sleep under a tree. Perhaps Natan would let him stay awhile, and work.

He wished even more to stay when he saw the inside of the pipkin Dori filled with water at the spring. It was smooth and hard, of a darker brown than the outside, and the water did not soak in. Dori said that her father's pots hardly ever broke if people were careful. In that valley baskets were scarcely ever used for cooking now.

Natan grinned shrewdly when he saw how Crafn eyed his pots.

"You may stay and work for me if you are set on it," he said. "I need a servant."

Then Crafn who, while he was yet a small boy, had learned all that Burosli the master potter could teach, cut wood and carried water and packed clay and made fires and cleared away ashes and pounded shells and broken rock in a

stone mortar, to serve a man who could do what he, Crafn, could not.

Except for the one secret which Crafn wished to learn, Natan was not a master potter. Dori did most of the decorating. It was her idea to make handles, knobs, ornamental figures, and bands and lines for decoration of a different clay from the dish itself. The clay thereabouts was not very good, but there were many kinds of earth in the neighborhood which could be used in pottery. Crafn already knew the use of these. He knew that ground flint made the clay whiter and more solid, and feldspar made it clearer, and iron ore made it brown, and broken shells ground fine gave it firmness. But it was a long time before Natan allowed him to help in mixing the "slip" or molding clay. This was made thick like cream, and trampled with the feet to get rid of the air bubbles; and after the dishes were made they were set into trays of sand to hold their shape and fired in an oven built of stone and earth. Before this last process, however, Natan always sent Crafn out of the way, and even Dori did not know what he did to the pots to give them their peculiar hard finish.

But when at last Crafn began to handle the clay, and made pottery with all the skill of his people, Natan watched and grew silent. One

spring evening Crafn sat at the door of the pottery making a pipkin as a gift for Dori. It was of the same shape as the pipkin which she had brought to the spring the first time he ever saw her, but made partly of white clay and partly of deep blue like the sky, — a blue clay which Crafn had gone miles to get. He had started it in a round basket, and for about one third of its height the basketwork pattern was pressed into the white clay. Then he had coiled a strip of the blue clay round and round to make a broad smooth band, and on this band he made little figures in the white clay, telling Dori, as he worked, the story of Buroslı who played with the earth. There were all the seven brothers, with the fire-stick, the flint spear, the bow and arrow, the boat, the net, the plough and the clay pot. And for the handle Crafn made an old, old man with a long flowing beard, clasping the neck of the pot with both hands. Above the band of blue, with the seven figures of the seven tribes, the pot was of blue clay wi' h a pattern of white on it.

Natan looked at the work and then at Dori, who sat not far away on the grass. It was very quiet, the frogs were chirping in the meadow, and the girl was answering them softly in a little song she had made. As Crafn stood up with the finished pipkin in his hands the old man spoke.

“ My lad, you are already a master. You do things that I never dreamed of doing. Why do you stay making common pots for common folk? ”

“ To hear Dori sing to the frogs,” said Crafn gravely.

“ And why did you leave your father’s land? ”

“ Because I desired to learn a way to make pots which would last,” said the youth, “ which would hold water and stand fire.”

“ Ah,” said Natan.

Then he led Crafn to his own hut and showed him how to make glaze out of sand and potash.

“ I learned this by chance, ten years ago,” he said. “ My hut caught fire after I came to live here, and in the fire I found stuff melted together that hardened on the potsherds and would not break. Others have wished to learn the secret and take my customers away, but I never let any man into my house before you. Mice love not to play with kittens, and I had no mind to lose either my work or my daughter. But you are my son, and you and Dori will do my work when I am gone.”

Crafn and Dori went back at last to live in the land of Burosli, and Weena told their children all the old stories of the First Potter,— how he could make images of his enemies, and when an

80 THE FORTUNATE PIPKIN

arm or leg broke off the image the man who looked like it would break a bone; how he learned to make the pipkin sit up and the jug hang from the hand; how he and the Tree Brother quarreled, and the Tree Brother tried to make wooden dishes and failed. Thousands of years afterward, wise men found some of Crafn's pots that had been sold to the Ploughing People for their barrows, and stood them up on a shelf in a great museum for all the world to see.

VII

THE STONE OF COVENANT

ALITTLE while after Yeru came to live in the village of the Ploughing People he heard, one evening, that all the most important men of the village were to be away next day.

“Where are they going?” he asked of Thode the chief’s son, who told him the news.

“To the bargain place — the Stone of Covenant,” answered Thode, very proud that he knew more than this big boy. He used first a word which means “the place where all boatloads are bound,” and then one which meant “the stone where men come together.” Yeru did not understand any better than he did before.

“What do they do there?” he asked.

“They get things to bring home,” said Thode and ran away, for he heard his mother calling.

Yeru was considerably puzzled. He made up his mind that he would see where this place was. There was no need for him to say anything about it to any one else. He did not wish to join the

82 THE STONE OF COVENANT

party of men, only to see what this mysterious errand of theirs might be. Next morning they went away, all laden with packs of hides, bundles of one thing and another, and carrying-baskets full of grain. Why should men take all these things away into the deep woods?

Yeru loped along in the cool morning air, just out of sight of the party from the village, and found that they were going far beyond any place he had yet visited. They followed the river down the valley to the broad meadows where it lay down to rest, and then turned from it, to cross the low range of hills and go down into the forest. This was becoming exciting. Yeru had heard that when one went very far from home, one came into a place where the people spoke a strange language. He wondered how the men of the Ploughing People expected to make themselves understood.

“How did things get their names in the first place?” he wondered, as he followed the track of the villagers over the ridge and in among the trees. How did they know that a river was Afon, and “bar” meant a rod and “pin” something sharp that would prick? Then it occurred to him that words belonged to families, like people; those which meant things that were alike often sounded alike. “Ss-pin” meant a thorn.

“Mwg” or “moog” meant mist, and the people of those old days called a warm, foggy day “muggy” just as we do. “Ss-moog” meant a little mist rising off somewhere at a distance — a mist that meant a fire out there — smoke. Important prehistoric words that were said quickly, to call attention to something, were apt to begin with “s.” You can hear the letter “s” farther than almost any other letter, and a person who heard that warning hiss at the beginning of a word would be likely to listen.

All the tribes had some word for “river” because most of them lived near one. “Afon,” “Dour,” “Esk” or “Exe” were all words for river. If people speaking the same language knew of more than one river, they gave the extra rivers extra names; “Garw” or “Yarrow” meant “rough water,” and “Rhuddr” or “Rother” meant “red water.” But of all this of course Yeru knew nothing. He was wondering what the language of strangers was going to sound like, when he saw ahead an open space with a big flat-topped rock in the middle and a river flowing along one side. There were woods around the other sides, and several boats were drawn up on the bank of the stream. But nobody was to be seen.

Although the woods were very still, there was

84 THE STONE OF COVENANT

something in the stillness which made Yeru sure that there were people about. All the birds and animals had stopped attending to their own affairs and were waiting to see what men were going to do. Yeru flattened himself on the ground



like a scared rabbit and hoped that nobody had seen him.

Thump — thump — thump! Off in the woods somewhere some one was beating on a drum. It seemed to be a signal, for when the sound stopped a man came out of the thicket with a pack of beaver skins. He put them on the rock and went back to his hiding-place. What on earth did this mean?

A little way from where Yeru lay in the grass there was a rustle of the leaves, and a stranger man, in a curiously worked tunic, emerged, went to the rock, and unfolding the beaver pelts, turned them over and looked at each one carefully. He stood for a moment thinking. Then he took from his pouch a handful of arrowheads very nicely finished, laid them on the stone, and returned to the woods.

What in the world were these people about? Yeru could not understand it, but he lay still and watched what went on.

The first man came out, looked the arrowheads over, picked them up and went away. Then the stranger came out, took the beaver skins, packed them up and put them in one of the boats that were hauled up on the bank.

This sort of thing went on all day. One man would put something on the stone and hide. Then another would put something beside it, and he would hide. If the first man thought the price was right he took it and went away, leaving his own goods on the stone for the buyer. If he were not satisfied he would shake his head and go back to hiding, empty-handed. Then the buyer must either add something to what he had placed on the stone, or take it back and let some one else make an offer.

86 THE STONE OF COVENANT

Among the things which were swapped while Yeru lay watching were a necklace made of colored stones, a carrying-basket full of wheat, a feather headdress, three or four earthen pots, a spear that Yeru wished he had for his own, a fish net woven in curious fashion, some cowhides, a pair of enormous elk horns, a bundle of sheepskins and one of wool, a piece of a kind of cloth, something like felt, and a great many beads and trinkets. Some of the men who came to trade were quite unlike any that Yeru had seen. Two of them wore their hair piled up in a kind of pyramid on top of the head, stuck through with ornamental pins made of bone.

Nothing was said while the trading was going on, and only one man ever went to the stone of bargaining at a time. This seemed to be the custom.

It was the most interesting and surprising day that Yeru had ever spent. He was very late in getting home that night, and so tired and sleepy that he stumbled at once into his own corner and forgot everything until broad daylight next morning.

While he was sitting outside the hut in the sunlight eating breakfast, he remembered all that he had seen the day before. His mother was taking the fresh-ground meal out of the stone mill,

to mix a cake for him to eat with wild honey. He had found a bee-tree on the way home and brought her the honeycomb. As he watched her make the cake, he saw a necklace of colored stones around her slim, brown neck. He had never seen her without a necklace, but it had never entered his head to wonder where it came from.

“Mother,” he asked, when she brought him the cake hot from the hot stone, and he touched the beads with one pointed brown finger, “where did you get that necklace?”

“Your father traded for it at the market,” said Tua. “Long ago, before you were born, he bought the beads on the Stone of Covenant.”

“The Stone of Covenant?” asked Yeru.

“A big black stone stands by itself in an open place. All the villages know where it is. On the lucky days that are agreed upon, men go to sell what they have and buy what they wish to have, playing the trading game. On the days when they meet for that game it is forbidden that any man shall fight another in that place.”

“What would happen if he did?” asked Yeru, interested.

“All the men would jump on him and kill him. That is the law of the market-place.”

Yeru knew, of course, as all the children did,

90 THE STONE OF COVENANT

some of shells. Some of the men were always trading beads. They would buy beaver pelts with sheepskins, flint arrows with the beaver skins, beads with the flint arrows, and sometimes they would give a whole bagful of common beads for a dozen of a rarer kind. Once Yeru saw one of these men, a chief, buy from a strange trader a string of golden-yellow beads that sparkled like drops of yellow ice in the sunshine. They were of amber, and they had cost a man's life.

Yeru admired those beads more than he had ever admired anything else in the world. He wondered if the strange trader would understand his talk. At last he plucked up courage to go to him and offer to help him load his boat. The trader looked at him kindly.

"That is very good of you," he said, speaking Yeru's own language fairly well. "Do you know the way into the next valley?"

"That is where my people live," said Yeru.

"Ah," said the stranger, "do they welcome traders?"

"I don't believe they ever saw any there," said Yeru.

It made quite a sensation in the village when Yeru and the trader came up from the river bank. The trader made himself very pleasant

to the people, and made some gifts to the women and children. In the long autumn evening, when the glowworms were lighting the grass and the great moon was just coming up over the Downs, Machcha — that was his name — told the story of the amber beads.

“They were found upon the seashore,” he said, “and the man who found them would have taken them to his sweetheart for a love token. But another woman saw and desired them, and she was the wife of a great fighting-man. He came to the man who found the beads and said, ‘Give them to me for my wife.’ But the man said, ‘No, for they are mine.’ Then the other killed him and took the beads. But not long after, both he and his wife died of a sickness, and the people said that the beads were unlucky and sold them.”

“Do you think the beads were unlucky?” asked Yeru next morning, when he was helping to load the boat again.

Machcha shrugged his shoulders. “I have no knowledge of such things.”

“I think,” said Yeru, “it was not the beads which were unlucky; it was the men who were unlucky. If it had not been beads it would have been cattle, or grain, or the best fishing place. Greedy men always make trouble.”

92 THE STONE OF COVENANT

Machcha laughed. "You are a knowing youngster," he said.

"How many other markets are there?" asked Yeru curiously.

"I do not know," said Machcha. "There are a great many. I suppose that wherever men live, they must have places where they can meet and trade."

"Are the laws all alike?" asked Yeru.

"Not exactly. Some buy and sell in one way and some in another. But it is always bad luck to kill a man anywhere near the Stone of Covenant. Nobody can deny that."

"I should think it would be bad luck," said Yeru wisely. "A man would be a fool to break the rules of a game that all the tribes have to play. There would be no place for him to live."

Machcha laughed again. "Some day," he said, "you must come to Llyn-dun and be a trader."

And that was what Yeru finally did.

VIII

TWO TONGUES AND THE WHALE

THE longer Red Head lived in the town beside the Fleet the surer she was that her Daddy did not like Two Tongues, — although he never said so. Two Tongues had a smooth way of talking and always had something agreeable to say to every one he met, but all the same, nobody seemed to trust him. And yet there was never a word said against him.

When the old chief died and a new one was to be chosen, there were many who spoke well of Two Tongues. They said that there were always enemies to be kept off — people who would be glad to see the village by the Fleet burned and all its people killed or made slaves — and that in dealing with enemies it was well to have an answer ready. A lie told to an enemy was not a lie; it was a weapon. But others said that when talking is at an end, then comes fighting, and they said that there never was a liar yet who would not lie to his own people. They pointed out that whether there is fighting or not, one must always

eat. They argued that the one who knew the best fishing ground, the best ways of hunting, the best way of keeping the people fat and strong and lively, was the proper man for a chief, in



peace or war. They said that Machcha was that man.

While the people were still talking and arguing over this matter, in from the river came Two Tongues one fine morning, all excitement and exclamations, waving a long, strong spear.

“Ho-ho-o-oh! Oh-ho-oh! Listen, all you people!” he shouted, and all the people, startled and bewildered, came tumbling out of their huts

to see what was the matter. Some came down the log with notches cut in it, which was used for a stairway. Some jumped from the front platforms of their houses to the bank. Some dived into the water and scrambled ashore, all wet and shiny. When all had crowded up to hear, Two Tongues lifted his spear and everybody kept still. He took a long breath and began to speak.

“There is a great fish down the river upon the bank. He is quite dead. I killed him. He is a greater fish than I ever saw before — than you ever saw before — than anybody ever saw before — and I killed him! He splashed and thrashed and beat up the water with his tail until it made a fog from bank to bank of the river — but I killed him! He tried to bite me with his great jaws, filled with long sharp teeth in three rows — but I killed him! He tried to sweep me into the river with his great tail — but I killed him! He tried to roll on me and crush me — but I killed him! He felt my spear in his bad heart and he died. I leaped up and over his back and sang my song of triumph — because I killed him!”

Now it is a queer thing that people gathered together in a crowd will sometimes get excited and delighted, or angry and frightened over something that they might not believe if it were

told quietly to each one separately. The excitement seems to be catching. It was so with this crowd. When Two Tongues stopped for breath, all the people stood with their mouths and eyes wide open and said:

“O-o-o-o-oh!”

The only persons who were not excited were Machcha and Miria and Red Head, and the old chief's wife and daughter, and two or three of his particular friends. They watched the people thoughtfully and said nothing.

“Why did I kill this great fish?” went on Two Tongues, waving his spear. “Was it because he had done me any harm? I had never seen him before, nor his father or mother or wife or children or aunts or uncles or cousins or any of his people. Was it because I wanted him for myself? I left him there, on the bank where I killed him, and did not take even one piece of one fin for myself. Was it because I wished to skin him and wrap myself in his hide? That hide would cover four houses such as mine. No. No. It was for the Tribe I did it. For the Tribe I fought and risked my life. I desired to give the Tribe a feast upon the flesh of the great earth-shaking and sea-swallowing fish.”

“Ho-o-o-o-o!” shouted all the people. The idea of a great feast, when everybody should eat

and eat until eating was really tiresome, was most delightful. Some of the crowd made a movement to start at once for the place where the great fish lay waiting. But Two Tongues lifted his hand to stop them, and went on in a very solemn voice:

“And that is not all. There was a greater reason than that. I have saved the Tribe from an awful fate. If I had not killed this fish, he would have eaten up all the other fishes and drunk up all the water in the river. We should have died of hunger and thirst. Our God would have gone away and left us because we could not make him offerings. The great fish was coming to eat up our food — and I killed him! He has been drinking up the water until the river is already low — and I killed him! Now he is dead, and the river will be full again, and there will be plenty of fish — because I killed him!”

All the people said “Ah-h-h-h-h!” and looked at each other, — all but the little group of those who still remembered the old chief. The old chief had not made many speeches, but there was no talk of fishes drinking up the water in his day.

It was quite true that the river was low, but there had been dry weather for a long time. When people are excited in a crowd they think only of what is going on.

“Now,” said Two Tongues in a lordly and triumphant manner, leaning on his long and strong spear, “we will go and eat this fish that I have killed. I make him a free gift to the Tribe. We will eat, and eat, and eat, and do nothing but eat, until we can eat no more, and then there will be plenty for the birds and beasts.”

“Yi-i-i-i-i!” squealed all the people, — all but the little group that did the thinking and the looking on. The crowd jumped at Two Tongues and hoisted him on the shoulders of four of the strongest men. Another carried his long and strong spear, and another his shield. Another, singing very loud, led the procession. He sang a song about the new chief, the great chief, the brave chief, now no more called by his old name, but called the Killer of the Great Fish. In those days, when a man became chief or did some great deed, his old name was put away and not used any more, and he began the new part of his life with a new name, as great as he himself was.

They all went down the river until they came to a place where the water was shallow, and there, sure enough, was the fish. It was really a whale, but the people did not know a whale from a fish, and they lost no time in finding out that

the creature was good to eat. And how they did eat!

But presently Red Head sidled up to her father and whispered, "Daddy, Two Tongues said that fish had three rows of sharp teeth."

"What of it?" said Machcha.

"Why — why — there aren't any at all, not any teeth at all, not one row. What do you s'pose he did with them?"

"What difference does it make?" said Machcha.

"We-l-l," said Red Head soberly, "I thought maybe we could have had some. They would look so nice on my necklace, and it is 'most time to put on another decoration."

Red Head did not use the word "decoration" of course. The word she used was a great deal longer than that. It was a word of her own language that meant "Thing that hangs from a string to remember something by."

"Um," said Machcha. They were standing near the head of the whale, and he pried the little mouth open with his spear and looked into it. Red Head stood by with her hands behind her, very interested and curious.

"Daughter," said Machcha, turning and walking away, "can you keep a secret?"

"Yes," said Red Head in a very certain voice.

"Then keep that one," said Machcha, grinning. "Nobody but you and I need know that there are no teeth in the mouth of this kind of a fish. Telling people what they do not want to hear is wasting breath, and breath is useful."

Then he and Miria and Red Head went off home and left the people gorging themselves on whale blubber. There was plenty of deer meat in their house, and that is good enough for any one.

As they went blithely along, Red Head asked, "Are you going to be chief, Daddy?"

"No," said Machcha.

"I'm glad," said Red Head comfortably, "because you will have time to tell me stories."

"So am I," said Miria cheerfully, "because you will be able to stay at home and do the things you like to do."

"So am I," said Machcha, chuckling, "because it is pleasanter to live here when Two Tongues has got what he wants than when he has not. If the people want Two Tongues for a chief, I am glad they have got him. Now we will not talk about that any more."

The people ate themselves sick on whale blubber, and when they had got over their headaches, and stomach aches, and cramps, they found that Two Tongues had skinned the whale

and was ready to sell them the skin for things they had that he meant to have himself.

“This reminds me,” said Machcha, “of a saying of the old chief. When he found a man being very friendly and offering to do him service all of a sudden, he would say, ‘What have I got that this man wants?’ I am glad that I have not got anything that this new chief wants.”

Machcha and Miria knew how to make oil for lamps and cooking and grease, and they showed the people what to do with the blubber that was left. They showed them also what to do with whalebone. After awhile it began to dawn upon some of the more thoughtful of the people of the village that all they had really got out of their new chief so far was a severe fit of colic.

Some of them came to Machcha privately and asked him if he would not like to be chief. But he always said no.

“I will never be chief,” he said to them, “unless all the people desire it. Until they do I will not listen to this talk of my ruling them. I can tell them things about hunting and fishing, but I cannot tell them how to tell an honest man from a liar, and so long as they do not know that, the chief they now have is the proper chief for them.”

“But we know that the chief does not always

tell the truth," said one of the men. "He does not deceive us. We all know that it is not safe to believe more than half he says."

"And which half do you believe?" asked Machcha.

Then the men looked at one another and went away without saying anything.

Machcha and Miria and Red Head were doing very well as they were. Machcha sometimes went trading with people quite far away and brought home strange and beautiful things to his wife and daughter. In those days there were no large kingdoms. The world was divided into little neighborhoods separated by mountains, or rivers, or swamps, or lakes. Machcha fished all up and down the broad, still river which the people called Tam. Its waters were quiet,—safe to sail upon, free from roaring floods. It was not like the torrents that tore along between high banks. When the water rose it had plenty of room to spread out into the marshes and lowlands.

The people north of the river and the people south of the river were quite separate. Until one went some miles up-stream there was no ford. Except in one place, not far from the Temple of the Waters, there were not even good landing places opposite one another. Just above the

Pool, a point or "spit" of solid land ran out into the river on the south side, almost opposite the hill where the Temple was built, but the water was too deep to ford. It would have been a good place for a bridge, but the River People did not build bridges. When they crossed a river they swam or waded or went in a boat. But there, close to the little village on the Fleet, was the only good place for a bridge, and there, thousands of years afterward, the first great bridge in England was built.

Machcha sometimes paddled across the river and talked with the people on the other side. He found that they were friendly and glad to trade with him. What with finding out new fishing places, and new hunting places, and new places to trade with friendly neighbors, Machcha had quite enough to do without worrying because he was not chief of his tribe.

On the west of the village by the Fleet there was a marsh, not like those down-stream, wide and flat and wet, but sloping back toward the hills north of the town. Little rivers ran through this marsh, creeks and streams that rose in the chalk hills, and they were not like the sluggish muddy streams of bogland, but good water and good fishing. This network of little streams was a good hiding place also. No enemy could

know all the ins and outs of it. The River People could slip under low branches where nobody would suppose a boat could go. That was one advantage of the place they lived in. Another was that this marshy land, when it dried off, as it did in summer along the higher ground, was good for wheat and other grains.

The River People had found long ago that if they took the seed of wild grain and sowed it in rich soil it came up tall and strong and bore fatter and richer and more plentiful seed. Grain was good food, easily carried; it would keep well, and when game was scarce they could live on grain,—if they saved enough. The planting and hoeing and reaping of this grain was one of the things the River People did in company, on land that belonged to the whole village. Sometimes they boiled the grain whole, and sometimes they ground it between stones, mixed it with water, made a cake and baked the cake on hot stones. The new chief took all the grain he could get in exchange for the skin of the whale, and some of the people did not have enough to eat when they had paid him. The old chief had always looked out for that. The grain was stored in a common granary, a dry pit where it would keep. Nobody had starved.

It was true that the new chief spoke to the

people sometimes and said very pleasant things. He told them that they were wise and happy and brave above other people, and that was why the God of the Waters was kind to them. They shouted when he told them these things, because it is the nature of crowds to shout, but when they were at home in their own huts, talking over things with their wives, they said some very dissatisfied things about the chief. It was all very well to have a chief who was called the Killer of the Great Fish, but the fish was eaten up now, and they did not see any prospect of another one coming ashore. The name of the old chief had been Wise Man Who Knows Hearts, and the people began to wish that they had him back. Words are all very well, but they are not good to eat. Bread is better.

IX

ALL THE WAY TO CHAR'NG

ONE bright and early morning Machcha picked up Red Head and held her upside down, and said, "Wake up, Shining Light of the Household, for we are now going a-fishing! Just you and I are going, because your mother is very busy drying those plums."

Red Head gasped and yawned a big yawn that ended in a sleepy little laugh, and said:

"Oh — l-let me up, Daddy, and I'll get my new line and my best hook."

They did not wait for breakfast. They took some bread and cold broiled meat, and Red Head hopped into the boat and sat still while Machcha gave it a shove and then jumped in himself.

They usually went a-fishing down river or in the marsh, but this time they went to a place that Red Head had not seen before. When they came to a big bend in the big river some distance above the village, where the current swung around almost at right angles, Machcha held up his hand and said "Tchar! Tchar!" In their language that meant "a turn." The little vil-

lage that had grown up at the turn of the river was called Char'ng, and Red Head had heard of it, but had not been there. It was one of the villages where Machcha went to trade, and he had found there a man whom he had known in another village several years ago. This man's name was Brock (the badger). He had a son called Breck (the lightning) because of his keen sight and quick motions. After awhile Machcha went off into the marsh with Brock and left the two youngsters to play together.

They did not say anything for awhile. Breck motioned Red Head to get into his boat, and they paddled off up one of the little streams that Breck knew, where the branches of the trees on the bank dipped almost down to the lazy waters. It was cool and shadowy there, even in mid-summer. Breck looked at Red Head, and Red Head looked at him, when either thought the other would not be looking. Then they both began at once, —

“ Oh —”

Then they stopped and giggled.

Then Breck asked shyly, “ Do you come from the Fleet? ”

Red Head nodded.

“ I've been there.”

“ Do you like it? ” asked Red Head.

108 ALL THE WAY TO CHAR'NG

“Yes. But not as well as I like it here. There are too many people on the Fleet. Who is the chief of your people?”

“They call him the Killer of the Great Fish,” said Red Head cautiously, for she was always afraid she would say what she really thought about Two Tongues if she were not careful.

“Huh!” said Breck. “What do they mean by calling him that?”

“It was a great fish, and he says he killed it, and he gave the people a feast — and they were dreadfully sick,” said Red Head, still cautiously. One of the first things her father had ever taught her was never to say anything she was not perfectly sure was true. Another thing he had taught her was not to say anything to any one, except her own father and mother, which she would not like to have repeated to every one in the village.

“Huh!” said Breck again. “My father says your father ought to be chief. Can you keep a secret?”

Red Head nodded nine times, vigorously.

“Your father told my father you could. Well, that fish wasn’t killed by anybody. He died of his own foolishness. It was not very long after we came to this village, and my father and I were fishing in the great marsh. That fish

came up the river when the water came up from the big sea, and when it went back it left him in the shallow water where he couldn't get out. He threshed around awhile and he died. Father threw his spear at him, but he didn't expect to kill anything so big as that fish. Why, he was as big as three houses. And besides, father said that it would be best to let him alone because the people in your village might not like to let strangers have part of him. We went home and never said a word. But next day we went to see if any one had found him, and we saw a man walking all around the fish, very cautiously, afraid he might not be dead. When he found the fish really was dead he pulled father's spear out of the fish's back and ran away. Pretty soon all the people came down to feast on the fish, but they did not see us, for we hid in the reeds. And so that is why they made him chief, is it?"

"Oh, my; oh, my!" said Red Head, and she thought seriously for several minutes.

"May I tell Daddy?" she asked finally.

"I think he knows it already," said Breck. "When they come back I will ask my father if you can tell your father, and he'll say yes, of course."

They paddled out into the dimpling water that sparkled in the sunlight, and back into the dark-

ling ripples that glimmered here and there with stray sunbeams, and they caught fish, one after another,— seven and nine fish and an eel. They found a bush loaded with whortleberries, and Breck cut a piece of bark from a tree, and Red Head made it into a basket for the berries. They put big leaves on top of the berries to keep the sun off them, and there were some plover's eggs which they put very carefully on top of the leaves. Plover's eggs are so tender that you hardly dare to look at them for fear they will break.

“We cook these in a hot clamshell,” said Red Head, “and eat them with water cress.” Then without moving the least bit she added in a whisper, as a pair of ears twinkled in the fern, “Oh look-see! A bunny!”

They called a rabbit a bunny just as we do.

Quick as Breck was, the rabbit was as quick as he, and he had just got a fair look at the startled little creature when it went into a burrow like a streak of furry lightning.

Breck was not disappointed, because his people never ate rabbits. But he looked at Red Head approvingly.

“You,” he said, “are the first girl I ever knew who could see, and tell, and keep still, all at once.”

"My Daddy taught me, and he knows all about hunting and fishing," said Red Head proudly.

"So does mine," said Breck. "Well, now let's have dinner."

Red Head was quite pleased with that idea,



for they had really come a long way since she had eaten her bread and broiled meat that morning. Breck steered the boat into a little cove, and they began to cook.

A boy and girl of their age nowadays might have had to go hungry, for they had no fire, no matches, and nothing much but raw fish. But Breck took from his pouch a spindle-shaped bit

112 ALL THE WAY TO CHAR'NG

of wood, and another piece of wood with a hole in it. He held the spindle upright in the hole, packed some dry, rotten wood in around the point, and began rolling the spindle between his two hard brown palms, so fast that it was not long before the dust in the hole began to smoke. Red Head had some sticks all ready in a sheltered place near a rock, and they kindled at once from the tiny smoldering fire in the fire-drill. They cleaned some of the fish and broiled them, and ate them with their eager prehistoric fingers. They ate up all the raspberries, and Red Head even managed to cook the plover's eggs by wrapping them in moss and leaves and covering them carefully with very hot ashes. When they had eaten all they wanted they looked at each other and grinned wide, pleased prehistoric grins. They were having a beautiful time.

They had come quite a long distance in their fishing, and after their good dinner they both felt that a nap would be the next most pleasant thing they could think of. But just as they had begun to yawn there was a noise in the bushes. Breck looked around as quick as lightning, and there was a gray wolf slipping along toward them.

If they had not lighted a fire, the wolf would

probably have had his dinner before they even saw him coming. Breck's father had taught him always to make a fire when he was on shore in the woods for any length of time. He caught up a dry branch that was just kindling in the blaze and struck at the wolf's face, and the beast drew off with a snarl. Red Head had already caught up another burning branch. A moment later a spear flew out of the thicket and killed the wolf dead. But the two children were already in their boat, and their little paddles were flashing through the water, taking them homeward.

They looked back and saw a stranger in a sheepskin tunic run toward the wolf and begin to take off the skin with a stone knife.

"That is one of the Flint People," said Breck in a low tone. "The wolf must have been getting away from him. I never saw one down here before. If I had known there would be a wolf here, I would not have brought you to this place."

"Poh!" said Red Head and laughed. "I wasn't scared."

Breck laughed and frowned. "I was. He'd have got us if we hadn't had a fire."

It was one of the serious troubles of prehistoric life that the hunter might at any moment be hunted himself. Unless the people kept their

114 ALL THE WAY TO CHAR'NG

fires alight, and their weapons keen, and their eyes and ears and noses on the alert at all times, they might be dinner for some wild beast or captured by some enemy. If we use all of our knowledge, and hand it on to other people, as faithfully as our prehistoric forefathers did theirs, we shall be doing very well indeed.

When Breck and Ruadha reached Char'ng village, Machcha and Brock were just coming in with a load of fish so heavy it almost sunk the boat. While they were dividing the fish the children looked on respectfully, but after that Breck whispered a question to his father, his father nodded, and Breck nodded to Red Head. She caught hold of her father's hand and told him all about Two Tongues in one breath. The words tumbled out like the patter of a little bag of beans with the bottom out.

“ Oh Daddy Two Tongues didn't kill that big fish at all it died all itself and he found it with a spear stuck into it that wouldn't go in far enough to kill a pig you said so yourself when you told mother about it I heard you and Breck and his Daddy saw the fish come up into a shallow place and die and then Two Tongues went and told all the people that he killed it and I-think-he-is-a-liar-don't you? ”

Then she simply had to stop and take breath.

Brock grinned, and Breck grinned, and Machcha raised his eyebrows in a funny way he had, and lifted Red Head up in his arms and shook her a little, gently.

“Don’t you think he is a liar, Daddy?” she persisted.

“Our chief is as truthful a man as ever lived in the country of the Wee-Waws,” Machcha answered very gravely, and they all laughed. The country of the Wee-Waws is the country in which the people never tell the truth unless it is by accident.

Then Machcha and Ruadha said good-by to their friends and went home.

Red Head thought it was the most delightful day she had ever spent.

X

FLINT ARROWS

ONE morning Red Head awoke later than usual; she knew it was late by the shadows, the short shadows of the doorposts. As she looked up at the sky where it showed through the spaces under the eaves, she saw a sleek brown head with a yellow beak in the corner of the wall just above her sleeping place. Where a seed had sprouted in a crevice of the timbers it had made a nook just big enough for a tiny nest, and a pair of birds had built there. Every morning Red Head looked to see if the mother bird was there as usual, brooding over her eggs. It pleased her to think that the little thing felt so safe in that corner. And always, when she looked, she could see the small creature gravely peering over the nest at her.

It was quiet enough in the hut, but there was a racket outside. Red Head jumped up, shook herself and ran out to find her mother.

“ Mammy,” she asked wonderingly, looking over at the crowd on the bank, “ what are they all shouting for? ”

“ They are making war talk,” said her mother soberly. “ Daddy says that we may have war with the Flint Men.”

Red Head knew quite well who the Flint Men were. It was one of them who had been chasing the wolf that came so near pouncing on her and Breck. The Flint People lived on the bare, turf, windy hills away from the river, and they kept sheep. They were not in the least like the River People in their food, their talk, their clothes, their houses or their priests. From the flocks of small active sheep that fed on the sweet short grass of the high Downs they got mutton to eat, sheepskins to wear, bones on which they sometimes scratched pictures, and wool for a kind of cloth they made. They built stone walls round their houses and sheepfolds to keep out the wolves. They made arrowheads, knives, and spearheads of flint. They had fought the wolves so much that they were strong and fearless, and they had very little respect or liking for any way of life except their own. Their priests told them that bad spirits lived in trees and killed strangers, and that there was bad magic in the water the River People drank. The Flint Men

did not need to be told such things to make them dislike and distrust the River People. They simply hated the idea of being in a place where one could hide, and spring, and watch. On the hills a man could see for miles and miles around him, and fling a spear almost as far as he could see, and draw a bow before any enemy could get near enough to throw a spear at him and hit him.



Machcha had had a little talk with the Flint Men, and traded a little with them, so that he had found out their views on the River People. The River People did not much fear the Flint Men, but they did not like the flint arrows. The strong arm of one of the fierce warriors of the

Downs could send a flint arrowhead right through the wall of a hut.

The trouble was now that the Flint Men said that the River Men had been stealing their sheep. If this did not stop, and if the River Men did not send back the last two sheep that had disappeared, the Flint Men would make war, burn the Fleet village and kill the people. That was what all the loud talking was about.

Machcha was not doing any talking. He had been asked to speak, but he said that it was the chief's business to make war or peace, not his; he could only obey orders.

The chief said that they might wait awhile and make promises. Perhaps the Flint Men would get tired.

"Surely you who are so great a warrior can lead us to drive back these herders of sheep!" said Brock, who had come up from Char'ng to see what the Fleet was going to do. He and his people would have to fight the Flint Men if there was war.

There was a little mutter like a growl, and some of the men grinned, but the tribe finally agreed to let their chief talk the Flint Men over if he could, next day.

When next day came they gathered at the top of the hill outside the Temple of the Waters, but

no chief was there. They waited for some time, and at last they went to his hut and pounded on his door. All was silent.

After more pounding, they broke in the door and found no one within. In the mud under the hut were mutton bones. Two Tongues, his wife, and two or three of his especial friends had left town in the night.

“Ugh!” said Brock, when he saw the mutton bones. “Why should any man want to eat that meat?”

“Two Tongues was too lazy to hunt and too mean to pay another man to catch game for him,” said one of the Fleet men. “Let us go and ask Machcha what to do.”

Then they went and pounded on the doorposts of Machcha’s hut and called him by name, very loud and many times over. Machcha came out on the platform in front of his door and looked at them. He raised his eyebrows just a little and smiled out of one corner of his mouth the least bit, but he said nothing at first. He stood still, leaning on his spear, while they explained what had happened and what they now wanted.

“Are you all ready to take me for your leader?” he asked seriously. “Every one?”

“Ah-yay! Ah-yi! Ah-yah-h-h!” they

shouted. "We all say the same words. We know that you never do anything which you have said that you would not do. We know that you will not be our chief unless you know that we all desire it. We do! We do! We do! Now tell us what weapons we shall use against the Flint Men."

Machcha rapped with his spear on the platform, and there was a most respectful stillness. One could hear the dawn-wind laughing in the trees.

"This is what we must do," began Machcha quietly. "Two Tongues has eaten stolen mutton, but the rest of us have not. We must make the Flint Men believe that we tell the truth when we say that no more mutton will be eaten by our village. We must not let them come here and burn our town and kill our women and children. Talk will do no good. If a man believes you are a thief, he will not believe you when you say that you are not one. If you knock him down and tell him not to say it again, he may not believe that you tell the truth, but he will be careful about his talk.

"It is not our affair to catch the sheep of the Flint Men. They sometimes wander into the marshes and bogs and are bemired. We come not into their pastures; we want no mutton of

theirs. Let them not come into our town and take what is ours. I have spoken."

There was a shout from all the people.

"Will ye fight?" asked Machcha, his voice rising like the wind when it sweeps the valley. "If ye will fight, follow me!"

He led them up the hill and into the enclosure where the Temple of the Waters stood, and here he set forth his plan, pointing to right and left, for from this hill all the land of the River People could be seen.

"First," said Machcha, "we will gather the women and children, and all that we treasure, and the men who are too old to fight — there are only a few — and leave them within the temple here. Then let them pray to the God of the Waters that he make himself stronger than the God whom the Flint Men serve, and guard this his temple and his town against their arrows.

"Meanwhile our fighting men will be between these helpless ones and the Flint Men. We will go out to meet the Flint Men, and tell them that we did not steal their sheep, and do not want their sheep, hide, horn, flesh, bone or tallow. We will tell them moreover not to come into our country, as we do not come into theirs. Then if they will not have it otherwise, let them fight us.

“ But in the fight, do not we go out into the open country where they can see, for their arrows outfly ours. If we keep in the edge of the woods and under the trees and bushes of the marsh, then shall we be hidden.

“ When the fight has begun, it shall be our plan to draw them little by little toward the sun. If it be morning we will turn toward the eastern marsh; if in the evening to the western, so that they may have the sun in their eyes as they come. Then let us take to our boats, which the boys shall have waiting in the streams, and leave our enemy to follow afoot. They do not know the creeks, and the mud, and the bog, and the peat, and the tussocks, and the clay, and the muck, and the different sorts of dirt which our good river twice a day washes in among the undergrowth, as we know them. They will become bewildered and discouraged, and when they are wholly bemired they will be beaten once and for all and never try to do it again. We will not kill them or make them slaves. We will drive them back to their own country to herd their own sheep and eat their own mutton, and we will be the masters of our country,— to fish, and to hunt, and to trade with all who come. I have spoken.”

“ It is a good speaking,” said one of the oldest men, and the others nodded. They had herded

deer and elk by driving them into the marsh many a time, and this was no more than sport to them.

Just before sunrise next morning all the people went up to the Temple of the Waters on the hill, where their stores of food and treasure and extra weapons already were piled. The wild singing of the women and children, and the blowing of shell horns drifted over the tree tops to the hills where the Flint Men were coming to take vengeance for their lost sheep. Then the men of the little village by the Fleet went out to fight for their homes and their living.

To Red Head, watching with the others on the hilltop, it seemed almost like magic when they disappeared among the reeds. She had often seen her father slip out of sight in that way, and she had played hide and seek herself, but here one moment was an army, and the next there was no army,— only the waving of the water plants and the undergrowth. It was certainly witch-work to the men of the open country. They were wondering where the River People were, and all of a sudden the marsh was bristling with spears and arrows and eager faces.

But the Flint Men were in earnest, and they had no idea of going tamely back home after their long march and their loud talk. They

would not hear to any words of peace, and the fight began.

It is one thing to threaten vengeance and another to do the punishing. If the Flint Men had been wiser than they were, they would have made no threats. When a general tells his men before a battle that each of them can whip ten of the enemy, and they find that they can do nothing of the sort, they do not respect him any more. Now and then one of the Flint Men could see a brown arm flash out to throw a spear, but it was never there when the flint arrow went looking for it. The Flint Men could not get their foe out in the open where their long sight and strong arms and flint weapons would count for something. Little by little they lost their tempers and charged in after the wily River Men and were led deeper and deeper into the woods and lower and lower into the marsh. One squad of Flint Men heard familiar noises on a tiny island far from the Fleet village and found there the very sheep which had strayed a few days before. Others found sheep bones here and there, picked clean by the ravens and the wolves. It began to dawn on them that perhaps after all Machcha had told the truth when he said that his people did not steal sheep. The enemy seemed to have disappeared. When at last the muddy and tired

and disgusted Flint Men got out of the woods, they saw the River Men in boats on the river, ready to begin the fight again. The leader of the Flint Men got his force together and sent one of his men to ask Machcha to come and make peace talk.

“We will trade with you if you are willing,” he said, when he and Machcha had made peace. They were in the Temple of the Waters, and its walls looked very strong, and the boats gathered in the Pool were very many. “You are very rich. I did not know you were so rich. But why did your chief Two Tongues run away?”

Then Machcha told about the sheep bones.

“If I had told you this at first,” he said, when he had explained that even Two Tongues did not go to the Flint villages to take the sheep but found them in the marsh, “you would have thought us all thieves. We do not eat mutton; we do not like it. This man ate it because he was too lazy to hunt.”

“Was he a smooth-spoken man with a scar here — and here?” asked the strange chief curiously. “Yes? Then I know who he was. He was an outlander who dwelt with us for awhile, but he was too cowardly to face a wolf, and we drove him out. He liked mutton well, but with us none eat mutton who do not fight.”

"We can fight," said Machcha.

"You certainly can," said the Flint Man. "If we two are friends, it is in my mind that none will dare to fight us. Let us ask our gods to keep us friends so long as you and I shall live."

And that was the beginning of the friendship between the Flint Men and the River People of Llyn-dun.

XI

THE BONFIRE

STRANGERS bring bad luck," said Embri the priest, darkly surveying the silent group of the elders of the Ploughing People. "They have their gods; we have ours. Our gods do not like to see other gods worshipped. They have seen these strangers come and go among us without fear. That is why they darken the air, and spoil the harvest, and send the sickness upon men and cattle."

Duerc the chief pulled at his long white beard and said nothing. The winter had been colder and wetter and darker than for many years before. For days and weeks the sun hardly showed his face at all, and when he did, it was often veiled in mist. It seemed as if spring would never come. A short cold summer meant a bad harvest and little food for man or beast. Even in ordinary years the climate was so damp that grain could not be threshed on open threshing-floors out of doors, but only in huts. In such a year as this it mildewed. The pestilence walked up and down among the people until

there were scarcely enough well ones to tend the dying. A bad season was especially hard upon the elders of the tribe. Every one wished to know what had brought ill luck, and who could have done the unlucky thing; and there was ill feeling all around.

The prehistoric people believed that their gods had a hand in all the changes of the changing year. Certain holidays were kept in honor of the gods, that they might be kind in the days of planting and of reaping, of fishing and of hunting. These holidays were marked out by the sun.

The sun ruled the seasons. When he shone only a few hours in the day, or not at all, the land was cold and covered with frost and snow. At that season the people stayed indoors and slept a great deal, like the bears and the field mice. When he shone all day long and there were only a few hours of darkness, the earth was green and warm and fruitful, birds and animals were all awake and full of eager life, and the people were busy with work or play from dawn to dark.

In the very darkest and coldest of the winter there came a day when the sun rose earlier and set later than he had the day before, and that was a holiday — it was afterward known as Yule. In summer a day when the light lasted longer

than on any other day of the year, came midway of the warm months, between the time of planting and the time of reaping, and that was a holiday, — Midsummer Day. There were four days kept as lesser holidays, at the beginning of spring, the beginning of summer, the beginning of fall and the beginning of winter, and these were later known as “quarter days,” when rent and debts were paid, — Candlemas, Old May Day, Lammas and Martinmas. But this was long after the prehistoric people were gone from the earth.

While all the tribes kept these holidays, no two of them did it in exactly the same way. Villages had their own customs and songs and stories, and on each holiday the children growing up learned a little more of the ways of their people.

Now May Day was near at hand, and the chill winds still shuddered down the valley, and Embri the priest said that the gods were angry with their people.

Duerc the chief was older than most of the men of his people, and he remembered bad seasons before any stranger came. In his boyhood every one in that village was his cousin, at least, if not his mother or father or brother or sister or grandfather or grandmother or uncle or aunt.

The first stranger who came there was killed, according to the old custom,—and then they had the worst harvest there had been in years. Duerc's father, who was chief in those days, said that the gods must have been interested in that stranger, and after that they left off killing strangers, and the tribe grew prosperous and powerful.

When Dodi and Tua and their children came to the village to live, Duerc made them welcome; when Machcha of the River People came trading, he was fed with the best that the people had and honorably treated. All that Duerc required was that those who lived in the village should obey the law of the village, do their share of work and fight for the village in time of war. But Embri the priest said that no good could come of changing the customs of the people. No one could tell what strangers were thinking,—and when people's thoughts begin to change, there is no knowing where they will stop.

Now as May Day drew near the priest was talking of the old custom of making a sacrifice to the gods on that day. Bonfires were always kindled on hilltops and in the open space around which the huts were built, and the calves and young animals of all kinds that had been born since last May Day were passed from hand to

hand over the fire. The people cleared all the rubbish out of their houses — old garments, broken tools, pots and weapons, whatever was worn out and useless — and threw these into the fire. When the old, muddy, foul snow-water was running away into the valleys, and the rains washed the world clean, and the little new leaves clothed the trees, it was a good time to begin using and wearing new things.

But the sacrifice that Embri was calling the people to make was a greater one. He said that if a life was sacrificed in the fire it would show the gods that the old worship had not been forgotten, and that love of them and fear of them were alive in the hearts of the people. Those who listened to this talk of Embri's looked rather doubtful and not very happy. To please the gods by killing some one in their honor is exciting, of course, but it is terrifying to think that the sacrifice may be you yourself.

Things were in this unsettled state, nobody saying much and everybody thinking hard, when on the eve of May Day a boat shot round the curve of the river, and Yeru the son of Dodi leaped ashore. He had some one with him, — a strange youth from the River People, Breck, whose father was chief of Char'ng on the Thames. Yeru had gifts for his father and

mother and sister and their friends, and Dodi and Tua were glad to see their son, but they did almost wish he had not come just then. They wished still more that he had not brought a guest with him.

Yeru had been looking forward eagerly to this holiday at home. As he and Breck came up from the river, they heard the blowing of the horns, and when they reached the village the bonfires were already kindled with the magic rowan wood, the mountain ash. The big bowls of metheglin, brewed of honey and boiling water and yeast and spices, were there for every one, and so was the white-pot, a kind of junket made with milk, eggs and honey. The girls were finishing their garlands of saxifrage, primrose, stonecrop, and hawthorn; the lads had made pipes for the May music from the bark that sheathed the May boughs. Here and there people were dancing. Yeru listened to the thump of the drums and the shrilling of the pipes, tingling to the very ends of his fingers and toes with memories and dreams of half-forgotten years,— and with a sense of danger.

It is hard for people in a crowd to think; they only feel. That is why an angry crowd is so much like a pack of wolves. Each man feels not only his own ugly temper but the fierce mood of

the rest, and it is too strong for him. Only a strong man can think coolly in an excited crowd. This crowd was excited over something, and many glances were thrown at Breck the stranger and those who were sheltering him.

Suddenly the high voice of Embri rang out in one of the old songs, and the flames leaped as if they understood. The chorus set the people fairly wild. In a moment they were shouting, yelling like wolves that have picked up a fresh trail. Duerc frowned.

"That is no good sound," he said. "They are calling for sacrifice. They speak of blood. I do not like it. I do not like it."

Breck stood erect, watching with steady eyes the whirl of the dancers in this strange village. Yeru's hand went to his knife, and Dodi drew a little nearer, grasping his spear.

"They are singing about strangers," Yeru said at last. "Do they mean us?"

"They do not know what they mean," said Duerc grimly. "Embri does. He means death. I have seen this coming. Myself, I hold it unlucky to harm strangers. But if they are not stopped, they will kill some one, now."

"They will have to kill me first," said Yeru stubbornly, and the old chief's eyes shone under their shaggy brows.

"So would I have spoken when I was young," he said. "Yet craft is the weapon of age, and it may serve here. Keep close to me."

He went straight into the howling, leaping crowd, and in sheer surprise they halted an instant and there was a pause in the racket. The voice of Duerc was uplifted in a song that none of them had heard since they were children, — a very old song that he had learned from his father when he was small. It was a slower song than the one the priest had been singing, and it moved to the stamping of many feet. It was a song for the young men, and Duerc took them out of the crowd and out of the village on to the hillside, while the people watched and wondered.

He cut with his knife, still singing, a circle in the turf, and kindled a fire in the middle with coals that Oren, the son of Embri, fetched from the great bonfire. He ranged the youths around this circle, and molded meal and salt and milk into a cake which he baked over the coals. This cake he cut into as many bits as there were young men and blackened one piece with soot from the coals. All the pieces were then put in a jar, and each man in turn drew out one in the gathering darkness, the smoldering coals lighting their grave, intent faces. The one who drew the blackened bit was Oren the son of the priest.

As the cry of his name went forth, the priest turned chalk-white and trembled.

"The gods have chosen," said Duerc, his deep voice tolling like a bell. "Here is the sacrifice."

Now it is one thing to mob and kill a stranger or an outcast, and another to choose a sacrifice by lot, in cold blood. If, as Embri had been urging, the gods wished that some one should be killed to insure a good harvest, then his son must die, for as he knew and all the people knew, this way of choosing the sacrifice was very old. The elders of the village had heard their fathers tell how once upon a time the sacrifice was always chosen by lot in this way. Then that custom was given up and a stranger or a slave was taken as the victim. Duerc was fighting one old custom with another.

Embri was silent. Duerc smiled in his beard.

"Leap through the fire, my son," he said quietly to the youth, who had not moved since he drew the black piece. "Heap more wood upon it, friends; he must cross the bonfire thrice."

Oren, the son of Embri, was tall and strong and a nimble leaper, but it was as much as he could do to clear that bonfire without falling into the flames. He escaped with a few burns and felt himself something of a hero. After that it would have been of no use for Embri to make

any further move toward sacrificing the strange youth to the Beltane fires. The people were wholly out of the mood for it. They spent the night in singing and shouting and dancing and feasting, and that was the last time that anything was ever said in that village about the duty of sacrificing strangers.



“When I am chief,” said Breck, as the moon went down over the dark hills, “I will remember that songs are strong magic, and that old songs have greater power than new ones.”

“It is good,” said Duerc serenely, “for a chief to know the songs his people sing and to lead in the singing. Words and songs and dancing may be either good magic or bad magic, but they are

alive and cannot be killed. Myself, I think that the gods who love us make the good songs, and the gods who hate us make the bad songs. I will teach Oren, the son of Embri, who will some day be priest, the songs which he ought to know, and he will learn them from me, because I saved his life."

XII

THE DREAM PATTERN

TWO wild kittens were fighting a rough-and-tumble fight on a ledge above a wooded valley. The hole where they lived with their mother was a little above the ledge and ran far back into the mountain. The ledge was like a stone shelf a few feet wide, jutting out toward the tree tops. The kittens clawed and cuffed and grabbed and bit at each other, but they made hardly any noise. Their mother had taught them not to make a noise unless it was necessary.

A little way off, in the top of an ash tree, sat a slim, brown-haired girl watching the kittens. Like them she knew how to move quietly and sit still. All the Cave People did. She thought that these must be the kittens of the wildcat that had been killed near the caves the night before.

The young cats had already learned to take care of themselves. In the midst of their row they rolled off the ledge and landed on the ground far below. The girl, peering through

140 THE DREAM PATTERN

the leaves, could not see them at all at first. Then her sharp eyes made out something moving among the fallen branches and underbrush, and then she caught just a glimpse of a kitten darting up a tree. She nestled herself comfortably in her lofty seat and began to spin.



Of course nobody, not even a Cave woman, could take a spinning wheel up a tree and spin there, but Gwynned had never seen a wheel. She used a distaff and spindle, and she was spinning a thread of pure wool. The Cave People usually dressed in skins or bark-cloth, but sometimes they traded with the Flint Men, who kept sheep in the open country, and got some wool.

Gwynned was working on some of this wool now. She could spin better than any of the other girls, and wher the weaving began, she was to help in that. She had come away by herself to-day to think about weaving. When she was thinking about anything she did not like to talk.

She had not climbed the tree with any idea of watching kittens, but the kittens interested her. She kept thinking of the way they had disappeared when they fell to the ground. The ground was yellow with fallen leaves, and the kittens were gray, striped with darker gray that was almost black. A gray stone that had fallen from the cliff could be seen plainly from where Gwynned sat, but the kittens had vanished as if they had gone into the earth. It was queer.

Gwynned was rather odd in some ways. She liked staying by herself now and then. Most Cave children hated to be alone, especially out of doors. Gwynned had come up this tree because it was taller than the rest, and she could see all up and down the valley. If any fierce creature climbed up after her she could make a spring to the ledge and get away. None of the Cave People ever risked not being able to get away.

Granny, who was every one's mother or grandmother or great-grandmother and the oldest

person in the caves, used to tell of a time, long ago, when the people lived in a different country. In those days food was easier to get, and there were not so many big, savage animals to fight. Enemies had driven the people to hide in caves, hunting in the forest for what food they could get. After many years the spindles and tools and weapons they had with them were all worn out or lost or broken. Some of these lost things have been found buried in the earth near those caves. The people had to make others out of whatever they could find, — generally out of the bones of the animals they killed. The small rude loom had chalk weights to hold the warp firm, — lumps of chalk picked up on the Downs. The woof was pushed back with a comb carved out of bone. The weaving was done with a bone needle.

Granny could dye the wool with the juice of plants and berries. The colors were not very bright or beautiful, but the dull reds and yellows and greens and olive or russet brown were not so bad, when Granny had woven them in one of the patterns she knew. It was just as well not to have the colors too bright. The Cave People found it best to wear clothes that would not attract attention. If they themselves were not hunting shy game, which would be quick to see

any unusual object, some enemy might be hunting them.

Gwynned wondered whether, if a man wore a cloak just the color of the kittens' fur, he would be invisible in the woods like the kittens. When the long shadows began to slip and slide among the trees, and she had spun all her wool, she took her skein of yarn and her question home to Granny.

It looked pleasant in front of the caves when she came around the shoulder of the hill and saw the fires leaping up as red as the sunset. There were no kettles hung over the blaze, but there was cooking going on. A stick, pointed at both ends, was stuck into the ground slantwise, so that the upper end was over the coals, and this would hold a slice of meat to broil. Sometimes a roast was hung from a branch by a twisted cord of bark, which slowly untwisted, turning the meat so that it would roast evenly. Sometimes a hole was dug and a fire made in it on stones, and when the fire had all burned down to coals it was covered over with ashes, and meat was put in, wrapped carefully in leaves, and covered up with earth. This was a good way to roast game. The people hardly ever had any grain, but they could make a kind of meal out of acorns, pounded and washed over and over again to take out the bitter

taste. To-night there was plenty of meat, for the men had killed a deer. Gwynned ate her slice of venison with a good appetite, for she had had nothing except a few nuts since morning. After supper she told Granny about the kittens.

“What color were the kittens?” asked the old woman.

“Like burnt log and cold ashes,” said Gwynned.

“Look again,” said Granny.

Gwynned looked again, many times, during the days that followed. She spent much of her time in the top of the tree beside the ledge, and she saw the kittens almost every day. They played and squabbled and slept in the sunshine, and ate the birds and rats and snakes they caught, just as if she were not there. She saw that they were not only black and gray, but many other colors beside. They were rusty brown and dull yellow and a dingy, yellowish white, all sorted out in cloudy irregular patches and shaded spots and stripes. To match their coats in weaving, one would need to use almost all the colors there were.

As any one can prove by trying, it is much easier to see a thing that is all one color, out of doors, than to see one that is of many colors in a plaid or stripe. Gwynned had never known

there were so many colors in the forest as she saw now. She found green in the leaves and mosses, of course, but also yellow, and red, and brown, and gray, and black. The deep shadows were violet and blue and gray and black. The tree trunks and the stones and everything else changed color with the light. In the bright sunshine, a patch of gray lichen might seem white. Gwynned began to think that to match the forest in weaving, one would have to use all the colors of the rainbow.

When the snow was deep in the woods the women spent much of their time spinning and weaving. The men went hunting, or made and mended weapons, or slept. Songs were sung, and stories told. There were songs intended to be sung when weaving.

Gwynned loved to weave. It made her think of many strange things; it made her dream. She wondered if she herself could ever make up a pattern. The women told her such a thing had never been heard of. They always used the patterns they had with the greatest care not to change a thread, for fear of bringing bad luck. Only Granny nodded wisely and told her to learn to weave well, better than any one else, and some day a pattern might come to her.

One night Gwynned had a dream about weav-

ing. All the next day she tried to remember it. There was a mantle in her dream, woven of seven colors in lines and squares and oblongs and broken squares. The mantle was blood-red, and wave-blue, and leaf-green, and cowslip-yellow, and orange like the rowan berry, and violet like the rain-clouds, and black like the midnight sky. In her dream she saw it clearly, but when morning came she could not remember how it went.

Dreams are very strange things to wild people. They do not understand how a thing can seem real and not be real. Gwynned prayed each night that she might go again to the place where she found the dream pattern and find out how the weaving went.

She did remember something, however. In her dream she did not use a needle in weaving. She had something like the reel she wound her yarn upon,— a long, slender, smooth reel she thought it was, and the yarn was wound upon it. She found a smooth bit of wood and shaped it, as nearly as she could remember, into the shape of this strange tool for weaving. When the shuttle was finished she wound it full of the yellow-gray undyed yarn and began to weave. The women watched her disapprovingly.

“She is changing the pattern,” said one.

“It will bring bad luck,” said another.

“She does not sing our song,” said a third.

Gwynned was humming a tune that none of them knew. Little by little the pattern was coming back to her. At first it did not look like anything. It was not the rain pattern with its long slanting lines, or the snake pattern with its wriggly lines, or the tree pattern with its three-cornered spots, or the fruit pattern with its round blobs. There were seven colors in irregular patches and stripes.

It took a long time to finish the weaving, but Gwynned remembered the pattern perfectly as she went on. As it began to bud and blossom upon the loom, she found that a branch of evergreen seemed to bring out the green in it. Red berries brought out the red. It was shadowy in the shadows and bright in the sunshine, just like the forest. The women, watching, said it was magic, but whether good magic or bad magic no one could say. Only Granny nodded and told the girl to go on.

When the mantle was finished, the ends of the warp threads were left at each end for a fringe, and Gwynned knotted them together by threes and fours and sevens to make a tasseled border. When the chief saw it he looked curiously at Gwynned.

“Who taught you this?” he asked.

“ Nobody,” said the maiden shyly. “ It is a dream pattern.”

“ Dreams are lucky,” said the chief. “ I will take this mantle for mine.”

Now that was indeed an honor; but more was to come of it. The very first time the chief wore the mantle, when he went to trade with the Ploughing People, he brought back with him one of their people, named Yeru. Yeru had on a mantle woven of wool, something like the one Gwynned had woven from the dream pattern.

“ The woman who wove my mantle was of the people who live in towns, far away toward the sunrise,” he said. “ They only have the charms and the words for such weaving.”

“ This maiden learned the pattern in a dream,” said the chief. “ She is not of their people, but of ours.”

“ She *is* of their people,” said Granny, lifting her long, thin finger. “ A long time ago, when our people were running away from an enemy, we came to a village of huts and destroyed it. This was in the time of your father, Chief, while you were yet a youth. In the woods we found a little child who had fallen asleep, and my daughter, whose child had died, took the little maid for her own. This is she, the maiden whom we call Gwynned. She is not like our maidens.

She is wise and silent. She does not fear to be alone. She is skilful with her hands, and above all she understands the spinning and weaving of wool. When she had learned to weave, the spirits of her people came and taught her in a dream the pattern of that mantle. The things we have watched our mothers do when we were very little are ours for always."

"That is so," said Yeru. "My mother was a forest woman, and I have always thought that I should take a forest woman for my wife."

Gwynned looked at Yeru, and somehow he did not seem strange to her, although he was a stranger. She went away with him after awhile and lived with him in the village of which he came to be head man, far away toward the sunrise.

XIII

THE WEB-FOOTED PEOPLE

RED HEAD spent one long summer morning among the women of a Flint village, hearing tales of the Web-footed People. This village was on the Farther Downs where Machcha now and then traded. He had a big boat which would carry several persons and various sorts of goods, and in this he followed the coast first in one direction and then in the other, and went up the rivers as far as he could. He often took Red Head with him after her mother died, because he did not like to leave her alone at Llyn-dun, and she did not like to be left. She was now almost as tall as he was and could handle a boat or a fishing net, bow and arrow, spear, or hook and line as well as any boy she knew, except perhaps Breck. This time Breck was in their party.

Red Head knew something of the language of the Flint People; she liked to play with the young lambs, and she was learning to spin wool.

For these three reasons she chose to stay with the friendly shepherd folk while the men went among the hills to trade.

At first Machcha could not make out the story she told him, for he had never heard anything just like it before. The beginning, and the middle, and the end of the story was the great bog that lay beyond the Downs and stretched away as far as eye could see. This bog was the home of the Web-footed People. They were goblins and could walk on water. They were wizards and could change themselves into fish and pull down people by the feet, if they came near the water. Their god was a monstrous worm,—a snake-like creature who devoured sheep and cattle and sometimes human beings in his den in the swamp. No one had seen him, but either he came for his prey in the night, or the Web-footed People stole it and offered it to him. Red Head was not quite sure which.

The bog was like a sea of reeds, and sometimes at night a white mist lay on it, like snow, in the moonlight. The Flint People said that this mist was the breath of the snake-god, and that it would take away the wits of those who walked that way.

“Daddy,” said Red Head, as she went with Machcha toward the camp they had made on

152 THE WEB-FOOTED PEOPLE

a river bank — she had waited to have him all to herself — “do people really have web feet?”

“I never saw any web-footed people,” said Machcha.

In the dusk, as they looked from the brow of the hill, they saw scores of flickering, smoky lights wavering over the bog, never quite still.

“Are those the fires of the people who live there?” asked Red Head, greatly interested.

“No,” said her father, “that is wildfire — dead man’s candle. You see it often in boggy land. You must never follow it, or you will get into mud over your head.”

Red Head watched the lights dance and swing over the miles and miles of bog, where tons of rotting plants and moss and reeds and tree trunks lay just under the live green on the surface, until she and Machcha took the path to their own camp among the trees. When they got into the circle of the cooking fires there was nothing to be seen outside it but the big dark.

The next morning, before it was light, she woke and lay thinking. Usually she slept like a dormouse and had to be awakened, but the day before she had been sitting quietly spinning and hearing stories all day, instead of boating or running about over the hills. The time seemed so

long and still that as the light grew, a plan came into her head. She would go herself and see what the Web-footed People were really like.

She would not have thought of such a thing if she had been brought up as most children are. But she had never in her life known what it was



to be afraid of anything. Her Daddy had taken care of her and taught her to take care of herself.

She knotted up her wavy red-gold hair, picked up spear and fishing basket and a little bag of trading stores, and stole down to her own particular little boat. The sky was blossoming into bright clouds like heaps and windrows of roses.

154 THE WEB-FOOTED PEOPLE

She used her slender paddle as easily as a fish moves its tail, and the boat moved as quietly as a fish goes gliding through the water. In a few moments she was paddling through a waterway among the reeds quite out of sight of the camp.

There was not a sound anywhere but the soft lapping of the quiet water, and the cool rustle of the reeds in the dawn-wind. The giant stalks almost met over her head, and birds nesting among them watched her with bright, knowing eyes. A big, solemn crane standing in a pool fishing put down the foot he had tucked up among his feathers and took up the other as she went past. At last she came out of the reedy thicket into a sluggish channel at the edge of a bright-green meadow tufted with clumps of rushes, water plants and gay flowers. There was quite a commotion among the frogs as her boat shot out into open water.

“Perhaps,” thought Red Head, “these are the Web-footed People.”

She had half a mind to land and gather some of the flowers, which were of a kind she had never seen anywhere else. Then something caught at the side of her boat and tipped it over, ducked her in the water and dragged her down into the thick mud.

A girl from the Downs might have choked to

death at once, but Red Head could swim like a trout, and she caught her breath and held it. When she came up to the air again, three or four swimming men had hold of her. They pulled her up on the land, on a sort of hillock which was firm enough for a foothold. All the bog for several rods around it was quaking and shaking with the struggle, and when Red Head broke away from them and set one foot on the spongy green moss it seemed to catch at her toes and suck her down. She saw then that it was a quagmire. Nobody could cross it but those who knew just which hummocks were safe and where they were.

Red Head was more angry than frightened, because it seemed to her that these people must be very foolish to behave in this way to the daughter of a chief. Machcha was well known through all that country, even among tribes who had not seen him. The marsh people were thin and sallow; they had straight black hair and wore very little clothing. Although their feet were bare and splayed out widely she saw that they were not webfeet. All her beads and little things for trading had been lost when the boat was tipped over. So had her spear and her fishing tackle. All she had left was the little flint knife that the old chief had given her, and she

156 THE WEB-FOOTED PEOPLE

wore this on a cord around her neck under her tunic.

She spoke a few words in the language of the Flint People, but the bogtrotters did not seem to understand. She tried her own language, and they gave no sign of knowing that either. She said the name of Llyn-dun, and that had no effect. They began to push and pull her inshore across the bog, jumping from foothold to foothold in a zigzag that sometimes doubled on itself and came back almost to the starting point. She did not know whether they meant to give her to their god or not, but since they had not web feet, perhaps the story of the great worm was nonsense too. Of one thing she was sure, — if her Daddy knew where she was, he would come after her, if he had to kill all of the bog people and burn over the whole marsh.

After a long time spent in this sort of hop-skip-scamper, they reached a part of the valley where the land was more solid and came to huts and to fires where two old women were roasting sheep bones. Red Head did not like mutton, but there seemed to be nothing else to eat, and as she was hungry she ate the slice they offered her. The marsh men went off across the bog, looking and acting more like frogs than any other creatures.

Red Head looked about her, thinking. If they ever left her alone long enough, near the water, she would dive and swim under water until she was out of sight among the reeds. If she could find or make a boat she would go away in that. If she could only make them understand who she was, they would not dare to hold her. Even now they seemed a little afraid of her,—her eyes were so bright, and her hair was so red, and she stood so straight and fearless. Perhaps they suspected she was a chief's daughter.

Presently, out from among the huts came a little group of men. One of them, older than the rest, seemed to be the chief, and he gave orders. A rope made of plaited rushes was thrown suddenly round Red Head's feet, and she was tripped and tied hand and foot and put in a boat. The chief and his followers got into other boats, one of them towing the coracle in which Red Head was lying. They paddled in single file through a crooked creek that ran into a little lake, and in the middle of this lake was a sort of raft of logs on which two or three tiny huts were built. The raft rested on a kind of island made by heaping up stones and rubbish in the shallow water and driving stakes around the heap to hold it in place. It was the style of lake dwelling which afterward came to be called a crannog.

158 THE WEB-FOOTED PEOPLE

Red Head thought it was a very silly make-shift.

She was carried into the largest hut and set down in a corner, and then they all went away except one woman who spoke the language of the River People. She was called Nona, and she said that she had been stolen when a child and had lived in the bog ever since. She was the wife of the old chief. She said that Red Head was to be the wife of the old chief's son, who was now away on the other side of the marsh, getting cattle from the Ploughing People.

“I won’t!” said Red Head.

“You will,” said Nona. “You would be silly to do anything else. A woman has to spend her time over cooking pots and fish nets. As well in one place as another.”

“I do not like people who steal,” said Red Head scornfully.

“Steal,” said Nona. “That is only a word. Everybody takes things. The chief takes whatever he wants — even from outside people. All that comes in here, stays. Nobody dares come in to get it back.”

Red Head was sitting with her knees drawn up and her arms resting on them and her face bowed on her hands. Nona glanced at her with a queer, spiteful, satisfied look.

“ You need not cry,” she said. “ You will never get back to your own people, so that there is no use in crying about them. Your husband will be the one to make you cry. You will never get out, for all your crying. What comes in here, stays.”

What Nona did not see in the half light was that the girl had managed to get out her flint knife and was digging with the point of it at the tough cord of braided rushes. She pried carefully for fear of breaking the point, for though the knife was sharp it was brittle. She knew that if she could fray the rope until one strand parted, the rest would be easy. She laughed silently as she understood that Nona thought her crying.

Perhaps talking her own talk had made Nona remember things that she had long forgotten. She talked on, while Red Head closed her sharp white teeth on a loop of rush and gnawed like a beaver.

“ You will cry, and cry, and cry, until you sleep and dream of your own place, and then wake up crying. Then you will have the fever, and your bones will ache, and you will shake like the wild oats in the wind. Then after awhile you will not care any more. You will not care about anything.” Nona muffled her head and

shoulders in her cloak after awhile and lay down in the doorway to sleep.

Red Head was not a bit sleepy. She went on sawing and gnawing at the rope around her wrists, while all the world grew stiller and stiller. From far away came the boom of a bittern. The wind, which had died down, began to blow again as if it felt the dawn coming. Red Head cut through the last strand of braided rush and freed her hands; then her feet.

She was thinking what she should do next when she heard her own name called, very softly. If her hearing had not been as quick as a squirrel's she would not have heard it at all. The whisper came from the other side of the wall of the hut, which was of woven reeds.

“Yes?” she whispered.

“I am Breck. I followed you. I saw them put you here, but I waited until the moon went down and the wind came up and they were all asleep. Are you alone?”

“One woman lies in the doorway.”

“There are other guards on that side. I will cut a hole here.”

“I can help,” whispered Red Head. Neither of them spoke another word until they had torn and cut and burrowed an opening close to the floor and just big enough for Red Head's slim

body to wriggle through. She was as supple as a weasel, and she made no noise as she slid into the water. Breck's boat drifted away as silently as a floating log. The two River youngsters were not in it, but swimming in the shadow of it, where the torches glimmered on the water. It was only a hollowed-out log, even if anybody had been awake to see.

The Web-footed People had not had much to do with the River People before this. They had taken children and young girls and sheep and lambs from the Flint People on the Downs, and cattle and grain from the Ploughing People beyond the marsh; but neither of these tribes knew much about life on the water. Sheep get foot-rot in wet ground, and cattle stray into quagmires and are swallowed up; and the water is apt to be bad for animals and human beings alike, where a valley has changed to bogland. Men cannot learn to swim without water, and there are no rivers on the heights, big enough for swimming. But Breck and Red Head knew every trick and habit of the waterways as only children who have had a river for a playmate can know them.

When they came back to the camp on the river it was just daylight. Machcha and the rest had been awake all night. Red Head sprang into

162 THE WEB-FOOTED PEOPLE

her father's arms. She had been away just a day and a night, but it seemed a month.

"If you had not come back," said Machcha, "we should have burned that swamp."

"That would not have brought her home safe," said the chief of the Flint village.

"No," said Machcha.

"None of our girls ever came back from the bog," said the old chief gravely.

Red Head looked sober. She was glad to be at home again, but it made her feel sad when she thought that there were places where she would not be safe, even though she were a chief's daughter.

XIV

THE GREAT HUNTING

IT seems to me," said Machcha thoughtfully, "that these Web-footed People are a very great nuisance."

"They are," said Donal of the Flint People, who lived on the Farther Downs, "but what can be done about it?"

"That is the question," admitted Machcha.

It was a question which he turned over in his mind quite often after he returned from his trading journey along that coast. He had gone to villages on all sides of the marsh which was the home of the Web-footed People, and they all told the same story. Cattle had been lost, sheep had been stolen, women and young girls carried off, grain stacks despoiled by the cunning thieves who lurked in the border of the swamp and could not be followed into its depths where they had their lair. No matter how carefully the villagers guarded their belongings, sooner or later the marsh people would spy out what they wanted and get it. They had nothing to do but to spy,

and prowl and thieve; they had no business of their own. Grain will not grow in a quagmire. Cattle, sheep and goats cannot be kept there. Hunger drove the Web-footed People to live on their neighbors, and hunger is a wicked master.

The legend was that their great snake taught them all their wickedness, but Machcha did not more than half believe that. The snake might have eaten some of the cattle and sheep mired in the bog; the Web-footed People might even feed him to keep him from preying on them and their wives and children. But as for his telling them how to pick and steal, Machcha had never seen a snake that could talk, and in his travels he had seen a great many thieves.

“Suppose,” he said to Dodi of the Ploughing People, when they met one day at the market, “you were to burn over that marsh, as you told me you once burned the woods where the Tree People were hiding. Would not that make it easier to punish the Web-footed People?”

“The marsh is too wet to burn easily,” said Dodi, “and I think that the people would be afraid to burn it because of the great snake. If he were to come out and hunt in our villages, it might be worse for us than it is.”

The bog was indeed very wet. It spread over all the bottom land of a long, oval valley. On

one side of the valley were the Farther Downs where the Flint People kept sheep. On the other side was a low line of hills where the Ploughing People pastured their cattle and sowed their fields with barley, wheat, peas, beans and kale, and here and there a patch of hemp or flax. The valley grew narrower at the ends. At one end a little stream flowed in from the wooded country above. At the other there was a wild tangle of fallen tree trunks and rocks and undergrowth and moss. Now and then some of the Tree People came around there to trap beavers. They skinned the beaver and ate him, and when they had quite a number of pelts they took the pack of furs to market and got what they could for it.

“Was the valley always as it is to-day?” asked Machcha curiously.

“Always since I have known it,” said Dodi. “I was not born in that village. In the place where I used to live, a landslide brought down great loads of earth and rocks into the river and choked it so that the waters above spread out into a lake. But soon they tore and clawed at the choked-up channel until they made a clear way. We could hear the great stones pounding in the river as they were swept away. But there has been no landslide in this valley to make the stream sit down.”

A little later that day Machcha found Raf of the Tree People coming up a wood trail with beaver skins.

"Where did you get these?" he asked, stroking the thick, soft dark fur.

Raf pointed over his shoulder with a quick thumb. "Back there — below the valley of the Web-footed People."

"Were you not afraid of the snake?" asked Machcha.

Raf showed his white teeth in a careless grin. "The beaver folk are not afraid. A man can be as brave as they are, can't he?"

"How do the beaver folk protect themselves?" asked Machcha.

"They build houses of logs, gnawing down the trees with their busy teeth. They have built many houses in that place and dammed up the stream. My grandfather has told me that when he was little the village of beavers was not so big, and the swamp was not there at all."

Machcha began to see light on the problem. If the beavers had made the bog what it was, and men should kill the beavers and destroy their dam, then the bog might dry up. If the land became dry so that the fighting men of the neighboring villages could go in there, then there would be very little left of the Web-footed Peo-

ple, for they would not fight, any more than they would work for their living. But how were the beavers to be dislodged? Machcha made a beginning by giving Raf so good a price for his beaver skins that he felt sure that Raf and his people would trap as many more beavers as they could, as soon as they could, for the next market.

To remove the beavers, however, was only one step in the big work of clearing the valley of the Web-footed People. The Tree People could not drag away the logs and clear the outlet of the stream, for they had no oxen. Moreover, it would be unfair for them to do all the work, when the Ploughing People and the Flint People would get the good of it. All the villages ought to work together in the making of this war; but the Flint People and the Ploughing People never had anything to say to each other, and both of them disliked and despised the Tree People.

Machcha had never kept either sheep or cattle himself, but he knew very well why sheep men and cattle men cannot live in the same country without fighting. When the sheep had eaten the grass down to the roots the cattle could not feed there. The Ploughing People wished to stay in the same place year after year, clearing away the trees, ploughing, sowing and reaping, pasturing their oxen and their cows on the rich grass

along the river. If sheep came there they would spoil the pasture for the cattle, and the village would have to go somewhere else, — and lose all the work that had been put into the farm land.

The sheep herders were good fighters; they had to be, to protect their sheep from the wolves and themselves from cross neighbors who did not want them about. The sheep were all they had. They ate the mutton, wore the sheepskins and the woolen cloth they made, and traded what they could not use themselves for whatever else they needed. The sheep could live on the short turf of the downs where the cattle could not, and they did not thrive in the wet meadows which suited the cattle. Therefore Donal and his people built their stone-walled villages on one side of the valley and kept their own customs, and the Ploughing People owned the other side of the valley and had their customs.

Machcha meant to see whether for this once they could not all be brought to act together. All the fighting men and all the resources of each tribe would be needed to drain that bog and clear it of thieves and snakes and fever.

“Donal,” he said, when he next visited the Farther Downs, “if your people and the Tree People and the Ploughing People were to make war against the Web-footed People, I would

come with some of the River People and help you. The young men of my village were very angry when they heard how bold these thieves are."

"The Tree People are no good," said Donal. "They will run from our dogs. How then could they fight with the great snake of the marsh?"

"Listen, Donal," said Machcha, clasping his knee with his two strong brown hands, as they watched the new moon come up in the soft sky. "I have a plan for you to hear. What makes the bog safe for the Web-footed People is the water, the mud, the quagmire. If the tree trunks and earth which the beavers have made into a dam were not there, the water would run away down the valley and the swamp would dry up."

"If all the wolves were dead we should sleep o' nights," said Donal, with a shrug. "The tree trunks are too heavy for us to move, even if we could get at them in the deep mud."

"Oxen could move them," said Machcha.

"We have no oxen," said Donal.

"The Ploughing People have."

"They have nothing to do with us. They would be glad to see us driven away altogether. Even if they would lend us the oxen, or come themselves and help us, how could they make their way in among the tree trunks?"

“Well,” said Machcha, “in that work the hunters of the Tree People might be of use. They go in there after beaver, and they would know where to step and how to fasten drag ropes to the logs. You and your warriors could stand guard in case the Web-footed People or their snake attacked us, and we would all help in clearing away the rubbish and driving out the Web-footed People afterward. The truth is, Donal, if we are ever to be rid of the swamp thieves it is work not for one tribe alone but for all of us. And that is a thing for you to think about and not for me to command.”

Then Machcha got up and went off to bed and left Donal to think.

The next day he went around on the other side of the valley and talked with Duerc, the chief of the Ploughing People.

“Suppose,” he said, “that you and the Flint People and the Tree People were to make war on the Web-footed People all together, and get rid of them for good and all, would not that be a wise action?”

“Sheep men are no good,” said Duerc. “And as for the Tree People, they are not really a people at all. Why should we make war on account of these other people? Let them make their own wars.”

"But I have a plan," said Machcha, and he explained it.

"All the fighting men of all the tribes," he said, "would be none too many for such a war as this. But the oxen are yours and not mine, the young men are of your family and not mine, and this is a matter for you to think about and not for me to decide."

Then he went off to see some especially nice tanned hides which Dodi had promised to show him, and left Duerc thinking.

He found Raf of the Tree People with some of his friends on the way to the beaver village to see what was in their traps.

"If the men of the Downs and the men of the Ploughing People join to make war on the Web-footed People," he said, "will you and your folk help?"

Raf considered. "What should we gain by it?" he asked. "We trap beavers there now."

"Flint arrows are better than bone," said Machcha. "Flint spearheads are good also. The grain of the Ploughing People is good, and there is plenty to eat on feast days. It is well to be friendly with your neighbors."

"If the others make war," said Raf, "we will make war. We are not cowards."

Thus it came about that early one morning

toward the end of the summer a great company of men trooped down to the lower end of the valley, where a strong force from the River villages had already encamped. Breck had come up at the head of a fleet of boats, and the boats were full of young men eager to punish the impudence of the strangers who had stolen their chief's daughter.

It was the Tree People with Raf at their head who trod the miry, squashy path into the beaver swamp and helped the River men fasten the drag ropes to the logs. It was the whole strength of the ox-team of the Ploughing People under Dodi and Yeru which tugged and hauled and wrenched at the half-seen logs until the whole mass really moved and buckled and came apart. It was the Flint Men under Donal who lent a hand wherever strong arms and sharp axes were wanted, and kept a keen watch for any movement in the reeds which might mean an enemy. But not a man of the Web-footed People appeared. This was nothing surprising. They never came out into the open to fight, and besides, the place where the beaver dam choked up the channel was far enough away from their haunts to be out of their sight.

Even after all the logs and rocks and rubbish had been dragged away, and the River men had

helped with boat hooks and axes to clear the stream, it took the bog some time to dry up. Slowly under the fierce heat of the summer sun the pools changed to mud, the mud became dry land, the quaking mire grew firm, the reeds turned yellow-brown and rustled in the wind like straw. Finally it was thought to be time to fire the reeds and lay bare the whole bottom of the valley.

The River men had gone into the draining swamp, shooting ducks and geese and fishing for eels, but they had not seen any people. Either the Web-footed People were too frightened to come out of hiding or they had gone away.

A day was chosen when the wind would help the flames, and fires were kindled on the edge of the marsh to windward. The blaze leaped fiercely on the drying thickets and swept down the valley with a wild roar. All the marshland became a sheet of yellow flame except one place near the middle which seemed still too wet to burn. Breck thought it was the lake with the crannog in the middle of it. As the fire died down, stumps and tree stems stood out against the glowing red of charring masses of stalks, and in the little creeks and runways the water glistened red as blood. But still no human beings appeared.

"They have gone off to find some other valley," said Donal.

"This will make good grain land and cattle pasture," said Dodi, turning over the rich heavy soil with the point of his goad.

Breck and the young men came up, smudged and excited. They had been exploring the paths in the burnt-over land.

"Now," said Breck, "let us go find that lake with the huts on an island in the middle."

None of them by this time had much fear of the snake-god. Clearly he could not do much for his people if he let them be burned out of house and home in this way. If they had gone, doubtless he went with them. Breck led the party toward the center of the valley; they were all singing and shouting and waving their spears. Breck's was a sort of harpoon; it had a barbed head of tough bone with the barbs turned backward. He had used it on more than one huge fish with which he had tussled from his reeling boat.

There were no men in the huts at all.

Instead, out of the water came a big snake, a bigger snake than any of them had ever seen, angry and frightened and perfectly ravenous, for he had been cooped up for days in a slowly drying marsh, with little or no food. He came

straight toward the crowd of young men, and they broke and fled. They had all had some experience in fighting snakes, and this one looked as if he could swallow a man as easily as a frog.

Only Breck paused an instant and stood with his harpoon poised, right in the path of the snake.



Everything went through his mind in a flash, as if he were dying. He thought he probably would die. But if that snake should get away, there would be no safety for helpless people in all that part of the country. With all his might he flung the harpoon down the snake's throat, where it would go neither up nor down and the

keen blades would meet with no tough hide to ward them off. Then he raced for dear life to get out of the way of the threshing coils. A few of the young men had turned to fling spears and shoot arrows at the snake. Most of them did not hit, and those that did made very little impression.

But the harpoon had done the work, and when the snake was dead, the young men lifted Breck on their shoulders and went singing back to the camp. Next day they skinned the snake and made belts and quivers and shields of the skin. It is said that the Tree People came back, after the others had gone home, and ate what was left of the serpent, but if they did, no one else saw them.

The Web-footed People never came back, and the valley became rich and fruitful. The hillock where the crannog used to be was always pointed out as the den of the man-devouring snake which was killed by the hero Breck, the River man who came from far away to deliver the people of the valley.

XV

THE WITCH'S SAUCEPAN

FINODRI, the Hairy One, was digging in the earth for certain roots which were good to eat. He was hungry, for he had traveled many miles that day on his own hard-soled feet. Even the strength of a lad who can climb like a wildcat and run like a horse and



fight like a wolf will give out if he is not fed, and game was beginning to be scarce in that part of the country. But in his digging Finodri found

178 THE WITCH'S SAUCEPAN

something quite unlike the roots he was after; he found a saucepan.

It was like no saucepan he had ever seen, but he had not seen many in his life. The Cave People, among whom he had been living, did not use earthenware much. Still, he had been once to the village of the Ploughing People with a message to Gwynned, wife of Yeru, who lived there, and seen the women using brown crockery pipkins of the oldest pattern in the world,—turnip-shaped, with a short straight handle sticking out at one side and a lid with a knob on it. He knew, therefore, what this thing was.

It was lighter and thinner than the earthen casseroles, and rather larger. The handle was long, as thin and smooth as a reed. When he swung the saucepan around his head, this handle bent and sprung a little, like a willow wand. There were two or three dents in the sides of the thing; it was yellow-brown with something like green mold on it. It had four very short legs. Finodri thought that Granny would be pleased with it.

Granny was a very old woman, the oldest woman in the tribe, and she was so old that most of her near relatives were dead. Some of the Cave People came over to the marriage of Gwynned and Yeru, and Granny came with

them, but she would not stay in the village of the Ploughing People. She heard of a clearing on the other side of the mountain with a half-ruined stone hut in it, and Finodri, whom she had brought up from a baby, made it warm and dry for her and stayed there with her. Some people believed her to be a witch, and she certainly knew a great deal about things that other people wished they knew. Perhaps the fact that almost everybody in the neighborhood had come to her with some question or other, usually in a very private way, helped her in her fortune-telling, but it is certain that what she foretold was very apt to come true.

Finodri tied up his roots in a bunch, slung them over his shoulder with the saucepan and started up the mountain. He had not gone far when he met Raf of the Tree People.

“Ho!” said Raf, “what have you got there?”

“A saucepan,” said Finodri.

Raf stood on one foot, scratching his leg with the other foot thoughtfully. “I never saw a saucepan like that,” he said.

“What is it then?” asked Finodri.

“Oh, very likely it is a saucepan, if you say so,” chuckled Raf. “Come to our fire to-night and let our folk see it. We will give you supper.”

This sounded very pleasant to a youth who had eaten nothing since early morning, and Finodri, Raf and the saucepan reached the cooking-fire of Raf's people just before supper time.

Raf's mother was making a stew in the old way, with stones in a basket, and Finodri's wild turnip and onion went into it, along with the wild fowl the men had brought home from the river. Finodri thought that he would not feel so hungry while the stew was cooking if he had work to do, and he took a handful of scouring rush and a piece of untanned leather and began to scour his saucepan.

Under his strong fingers the dirt and the green mold, if it was that, soon disappeared, and a patch of smooth shining yellow gleamed and winked in the light of the late sun. The heads of all the Tree People of Raf's kin came together over the strange dish as Finodri rubbed and scoured and scrubbed and polished. It shone as bright as gold, — though none of them had ever seen gold. There was a narrow ornamental border in hammered bosses and leaves around the edge, and the feet were shaped like cats' paws. It was the first piece of copper-smith's work that the Tree People had ever come across.

They all handled and admired it and won-

dered how it came to be buried in the earth for Finodri to dig up, and none of them had the least idea that many years before, when the Phoenicians came into those seas trading, that saucepan had been stolen from some shipwrecked sailors on the coast. It was sold to a chief of some Ploughing People who in an old forgotten war had been driven out of their village, and in their flight his people had dropped almost everything they owned and taken refuge in caves. That was when Granny was a little girl, and the chief was her father. The more Finodri looked at the saucepan, however, the more satisfied he felt at being able to carry such a treasure to Granny.

But in the morning that saucepan was gone. None of the Tree People seemed to know anything about it. Finodri knew that if they had it they must have hidden it away where he could not find it, and he did not even hint at their having taken it. It hardly seemed as if he had ever had such a thing at all.

It was as well that he did not quarrel with Raf and his family over the theft, because they really had nothing to do with it. It was Cholo of the Marsh People, poking and prying along the river bank, who had followed Raf up into the woods, and seen Finodri show the saucepan.

He had followed along to the camp of the Tree People, waited until everybody was asleep, and slid the saucepan away over the moss so quietly that even the quick ears of the wild folk did not take alarm. Now Cholo was away down river, turning his prize over and over and looking at it with curiosity and gloating satisfaction. Now that the Marsh People had been driven out of their valley, they were scattered and living as they could. It was not often that one of them got anything as good as this.

It was not so easy as Cholo expected to dispose of the saucepan, all the same. When he showed it to Yeru of the Ploughing People, Yeru looked at it and then at him, in a not very pleasant way.

“Where did you get this?” asked Yeru.

“Found it,” said Cholo.

“I don’t believe that,” said Yeru. But he heard of no one at the market who had lost or even seen any such utensil.

It was Embri the priest of the Ploughing People who bought the saucepan, and who gave Cholo meat and grain to make a feast for all his family for three days. On holidays it would be a great addition to the treasures then brought out for use in the feasting. Embri had heard of copper, but this was the first copper article he

had ever seen, and he was very proud of himself for owning it.

The first feast day after that was the harvest, which came on what we should call the twelfth of August, and it happened that Finodri came to the village and saw the saucepan.

“That is mine,” he said, pointing at it with a long, brown, hairy finger. “I found it in the earth.”

“It is not yours,” said Embri. “I bought it and paid for it in good meat and bread. It belongs to the gods, and they will be very angry with you if you steal it.”

“What do they do when they are angry?” asked Finodri cautiously.

“They give you severe pains inside,” said Embri solemnly; he did not know just how much this wild youth from the woods could understand about gods, but he knew that even the stupidest man understands what is meant by a stomach ache.

Finodri went away and hunted up Yeru, whom he knew better than he did any other man of the Ploughing People. When Yeru had heard the whole story, he guessed that Cholo had stolen the saucepan and had no right to sell it. Still, there did not seem to be any way, now, to set the matter straight. No one had seen Finodri

dig up the saucepan, and Embri would be as likely as not to claim that Finodri had stolen it from him in the first place.

Duerc the chief was just coming in, and Yeru made bold to ask him about the matter.

Duerc thought awhile. "If the saucepan is stolen," he said at last, "it will bring bad luck to use it in the feast. Tell Embri that."

But Embri was as much in love with the saucepan by this time as Finodri had been, and he was brewing in it a drink of honey and verjuice and herbs and other things, intended only for himself and the other priests.

Now was Finodri angry indeed. He stood up in his hairy strength and called upon any gods that heard to punish the priest who was a thief, and went away up the mountain to tell Granny all that had happened. He did not even wait for his share of the feast.

Granny heard the story without saying anything, but her old eyes had the look they had when she was gazing far back into the past and trying to remember something.

"How large was the saucepan?" she asked at last.

Finodri hollowed his hands to show.

"What like was the wreath of leaves and fruit along the edge?"

Finodri put a leaf and a nut, a leaf and a nut, in a line upon the hearth.

Granny frowned a little and paused.

“And the feet were like cat’s feet?”

“Yes.”

“And you found it — where?”

“Close to the old trail over the mountain, where one turns to go to the spring.”

“Heh-eh!” Granny came out of her dive into the past and chuckled down in her lean throat. “And what was that priest brewing in it when you saw him?”

“Apple juice and honey and herbs.”

“It is a magic saucepan,” said Granny impressively. “It knows its master, and if that priest is not the right owner it will be angry. Wait, my son, and see the magic work.”

It is one of the laws of copper that if a copper kettle is not kept perfectly clear and bright, or if anything acid is allowed to stand in it, the acid and the copper together make a green stuff which is violently poisonous. The drink which Embri brewed out of honey and sour apples and other things was not served until the feast was nearly over, and then only to a few favored guests. It was fortunate that the saucepan was not large, for all of the persons who drank any of that brew shortly became very ill. The village concluded

that it was because the gods were angry with Embri for using a stolen saucepan in their service.

Embri himself was badly scared, even more scared than he was ill, which is saying a great deal. He saw, moreover, that if he had any regard for his own safety or reputation, he must get rid of that saucepan at once. He sent Yeru in all haste to find Finodri and ask him to take away the curse on the saucepan and cure the afflicted ones.

When Finodri heard what had been the effect of one drink from his saucepan, he began to be rather afraid of it himself. It took all Yeru's assurances and all Granny's influence with him to make him go back to the village of the Ploughing People and get it. Granny sent by them a basket of the eggs of wild geese and a bundle of mysterious herbs. She said that if Gwynned would scour the saucepan perfectly clean and make of the herbs a drink such as Granny had taught her to make in the old days when she was a Cave girl, and if then the sick would take this drink with the white of an egg after every three swallows, the sickness *might* pass away. White of egg will cure a great many poisons, and though the herb drink that Gwynned concocted was the bitterest stuff Embri and his friends had

ever tasted, either that or the giving up of the saucepan certainly did cure their ailment. And even the herb drink was less bitter to Embri than the knowledge of the blunder he had made.

Thus Granny got back the saucepan which had been lost by her people, and as she knew the law of its magic, there were no more cases of copper poisoning on that countryside.

XVI

THE PEOPLE WHO CAME

WITHIN sight of the high rocky island that is now called Saint Michael's Mount, there lived a boy and a girl. The boy was called Trefec and the girl Lyndi. They were the children of Boswen, who lived in the forest, and his wife Kari. There were two or three younger children, but as they could not talk much or go far from home they did not count for a great deal in the plans of Trefec and Lyndi.

The boy and girl spent very little time in the low stone cabin on the hillside. They were never afraid of the forest, though they always kept a lookout for danger; the forest was home to them. What they were afraid of was the Other People.

In those days there might be two kinds of people in the same neighborhood, as different as a weasel from a wild hog. Boswen and his family and friends were dark and small, quick-motioned and sharp of hearing and keen-sighted. They built huts of stone and lived by hunting and fishing. The Cave Men on the coast were big

and tall and hairy, with red or brown hair, and light eyes. They looked like giants to the little wild men of the forest. The Cave Men lived also by hunting, and it was said that they sometimes ate human beings. Whether they did or not, none of the Forest People wished to be caught and taken to those caves.

If the Forest People had not been quick and small, and known how to build their cabins half underground and hide them cunningly with turf and brush, or if the Cave Men had been quick and active, the little folk might have been slaves indeed. It was quite bad enough as it was.

Trefec and Lyndi went nearer the coast than usual one day, looking for a stray goat. They knew a place where they could hide and look all up and down the beach without being seen. They had to crawl under some thick evergreens to get to it, but it was a ledge that overhung a cliff, cushioned with moss and fern. There was a hollow just big enough for them to lie in, their two heads rising carefully above the rock. With agreeable thrills of excitement they had once seen from this hiding place the Cave Men feasting off a stranded whale.

On this brilliant summer day they lay in this warm hollow, looking out over the blue waves and the long white beach. It all appeared quite

190 THE PEOPLE WHO CAME

peaceful. No Cave Men were about. The children did not know whether they had gone fishing or gone into the forest, but they hoped it was fishing. The big men made so much noise when they went into the woods that there was plenty



of time to hide, but it was pleasanter to think that they were not there at all.

“Look!” said Lyndi softly, pointing one quick finger at a speck on the far edge of the sea. “Is that a whale?”

It looked like a whale. It was oval and dark, and it was coming nearer. But it did not spout as whales did. As it came toward the shore, it looked still less like a whale. It made straight

for the beach. It was a long boat filled with men.

Trefec and Lyndi crouched in the bracken as still as two bright-eyed wood mice, watching. If this were a boatload of Cave Men, the Forest People would have to go away. It was not easy to live where there were only a few Cave Men, but if they could come across the water, there would be no room for any one else in the country.

These men, however, were not like the Cave Men. The boat was very long and big, as long as the trunk of a great tree, but the men in it were not so very big. They were dark men with black eyes and hair. They rowed the boat with many big oars, each oar taking both a man's hands to work it. There were great, bright-colored wings on the boat. The children had never seen sails.

The men were dressed in colors like the clouds at evening, — scarlet, yellow, blue, green, white. They had spears and bows and arrows. By this time little rustles in the undergrowth at the edge of the cliff said plainly enough that others had seen the boat and come near the beach to see what was about to happen. But no one had discovered the particular hollow in which the children lay, and they watched all that went on.

Just as the keel of the great boat grated on

the shingle, there was a yell from the woods near the beach, and out rushed three Cave Men, seven feet high or thereabouts, each with a huge club. They rushed toward the men in the boat, but before they were anywhere near the boat the strangers bent their bows and there was the twang of many bowstrings humming all together. The three great savages fell dead, each with several arrows sticking in his body.

The onlookers forgot to be frightened. They shouted for joy. Some of them jumped on the rocks and danced and howled with delight. But when the strangers looked up and beckoned and called to them in a strange language, the Forest People slid into the shadow like snakes. They did not wish to tempt those arrows to come in their direction.

The strangers did not pay any more attention to the wild people. They hauled their galley ashore and began to unload it quickly and handily. They kindled a fire and set something cooking in a shining yellow pot, and it smelled most appetizing, though strange. Trefec and Lyndi began to feel hungry, but they were too much interested to go away. The strangers were taking things out of the boat,—cloth of scarlet and blue and yellow, earthen pots, and more shining yellow pots and dishes.

Then one of the strangers bent his bow and peered in among the bushes where the arrow fell. Another went in and brought out what had been shot,—Boswen's goat with an arrow right through the heart. The cook began to skin it, making ready to put it in another great kettle.

This was altogether too much. Trefec slid down the cliff, clawing into the undergrowth with hands and feet, and Lyndi after him. They ran up to the fire and laid hold of the goat and began to pull it away.

There was a siffle of in-drawn breath from the watchers on the cliff. They really expected to see the children share the fate of the little goat.

But the man who seemed to have command came quickly toward the group and smiled at the two tumble-haired, excited children. He pointed to the goat, and dipping his hand into an earthen jar, he held out to Trefec a handful of beads.

There was a whispered "A-a-a-ah-h!" from the people watching above, for never had such beads as these been seen. They were shining like drops of water and bright as flowers,—blue, green, scarlet, yellow, white; they tinkled through the stranger's fingers like raindrops on a rock. He put them into a little blue bag and held it out to the children.

Trefec had no doubt about what he should do.

As quickly as he had come he seized the bag and retreated, Lyndi pattering at his heels. The strangers had more than paid for the goat. They had dealt with wild people before, and they knew that before there could be any trading the people must learn not to be afraid.

Next day there were many Forest People coming down through the woods to look at the strange boat and the strange men, and a few of them ventured on to the beach to trade.

The Cave Men went away. They were no match for the strong fighters in the galley. The strangers became friendly with the forest folk and soon picked up a few words of their language. Trefec hung about their camp whenever he could, and he and Lyndi picked up some words of the strangers' language. The strangers would give beads for food; beads for the fur of various animals or the feathers of birds, beads for the wild honey that the boys brought them. Lyndi strung the new beads in a necklace; and hung from it was a lump of queer green stone that her father had given her. The head man of the strangers noticed it one day and asked where it came from.

"Father got it out of the rock," said Lyndi.

"Where?"

"I don't know. On the hill."

“I know,” said Trefec. “I have seen the place. There is more of it among the rocks.”

“Show me,” said the stranger.

Trefec took the head man a long walk into the forest, to a place where there was a sort of cleft in the hill. When he saw it he flung up his hands and shouted. In the end the strangers made a settlement and mined copper and tin in that part of the country. The Phoenician smiths made these metals into all sorts of things, and Boswen’s family had the first copper pot ever seen in that part of the country.

XVII

THE FORERUNNER

“**A**ND if you run away from here, what will you be hunting? It is in my mind that you are of those who, when they hunt, find.”

Granny watched the face of Finodri as she spoke, and her keen old eyes seemed to see the face of another and older man than he.

“I do not like this country,” the youth answered, getting up and stretching his long arms until his knuckles rapped the roof beam. “It is crowded.”

“So were the caves where you were born,” said the old woman quietly. “Men are there and everywhere.”

“Except on the moor,” said Finodri, with a laugh. “That is the horse country. No men but the hunters ever go to that waste land.”

Winter was at an end, and lean and hungry from months of famine the forest dwellers were venturing out into the sun. In the villages, the people fared rather better, even in winter. They

had learned to lay up stores of grain in caves and huts and pits, and to dry meat and fruit when it was plentiful, and pile up mushroom-shaped ricks of dried grass for the cattle. At a pinch they could kill and eat one of their beasts. But the people who did not live in villages sometimes had a hard time.

Granny's stores never gave out, and she and her adopted son always had enough to eat and something to spare for the starving. She had taught Finodri to cut up and dry the meat of the deer, wild pig and wild cattle, and to store up nuts and roots and honey when he found them. Although she had lived nearly all her life among the Cave People, she remembered the ways and the comfort of her father's house in a far-off place. Herbs she had also, and dried plums and berries. When she told fortunes or brewed medicines for the villagers, they gave her grain and wool and leather. Many a long winter evening she spent in spinning the wool and weaving garments for herself and others.

All the same, Finodri had grown discontented. He was tall and strong, swift-footed and keen-eyed, a match for any young man of the villages in fighting, wrestling or games. Yet he did not care to live with the Ploughing People, or to tend sheep for the Flint People, or to return to

the caves of the forest where the Cave People dwelt, or to spend his days in a boat like the River Men or to hunt with the Tree People. He did not really know what he did wish to do.

One day he told Granny that he was going away to the moor to hunt wild horses and might not come back for some time.

The people in that part of the country sometimes killed horses for food, and the hides, manes and tails were useful for one thing and another. But the little untamed things would have been good for nothing harnessed to a plough. They were hardy and fleet-footed and as wild as hawks. They were not nearly so big as horses are nowadays; they were even smaller than the wild ponies of Dartmoor and the New Forest, which are only about twelve hands high. They were dusky in color,—gray, roan or nearly black, of much the same color as the wild moorland over which they ranged. They found food even in the bogs and mud-holes where sheep cannot go. Sometimes a herd would disappear for months at a time, hiding in some distant rocky fastness where men never came at all. Finodri could outrun most men, but no man could catch a wild horse except by a trick. It was as much as the best hunters could do to get near enough to send a flint-headed arrow through one of them. In

this hunting Finodri got on better than most men because he had the help of his dog.

Finodri had hauled the dog out of a hole in the rocks when he was a little pup. He had fallen down there somehow. There were those who said he was more wolf than dog. He was bigger, stronger and fiercer than the other dogs of the village, and if he had not stuck to his master like thumb to finger, he might have got into many sorts of trouble. But he and Finodri were always together. The two of them could have tackled almost anything.

Finodri had taught him to obey not only the word of command, but signals made silently, and in pony-hunting this was an advantage. The great brute could head off a stray horse or round up a herd and head them back from the open pasture better than a man. The main trouble in hunting wild horses was the space they had to run away. Nothing grew on the moors that would feed a man, and hunters could easily get lost among the slopes and spinneys and never find their way home. It took very little to send the leader of a herd scampering off into the unexplored wilderness of moss and ledges and scrub trees and barren fern-clad hills, miles and miles from anywhere. It really seemed, sometimes, as if one herd passed the news along to another.

Nevertheless Finodri liked roaming the moorland better than he liked most things in his life. At times he felt almost like taking himself off into the wilderness altogether and living on horse flesh, but he knew that that would be a silly thing to do. Nothing would grow in that poor soil; there was not even any good timber for a house. Yet he could not make up his mind to settle down in a village, even with good friends like Yeru and his family. Miti seemed to understand how he felt about that. She had never forgotten her babyhood in the tree-house. When her brother Yeru and his wife came to see Granny, she sometimes came with them.

What Finodri did not like about living in a village was that everything there belonged to somebody. It took years of hard work to have the right to a good hut and a fruitful strip of land and some cattle. The forest was better, but even there life was uncertain. When game was plenty the hunters lived well; when it was scarce they starved. Finodri could not help seeing that the game was leaving the country year by year. Soon the Tree People would have to move back into some wilderness where men had not yet hunted.

This time, as he struck into the well-known trail that led to the moors, he had a plan in his

head. To carry it out would need far more time and patience than ordinary hunting did, but he was ready for that. Day by day he ventured farther into the desolate moorland, but though he came within range of the skittish little beasts more than once he shot no ponies. It was not in his plan to frighten them if he could help it. He had brought as much dried meat and parched grain as he could carry, he shot whatever he found that was good for meat, but he let the horses go unharmed.

One day, when the shadows were beginning to turn from west to east, he heard a whinny quite near at hand, behind a rocky ridge. He crept up the slope and lay flat on the ledge with his dog flattened out beside him. The two peered over into the ravine.

Down there in the sunshine, away from the midges and forest flies of the thickets, were a dozen or more of the little animals with their foals, standing close together, lazily swishing away the flies. The wind was the other way, and they never looked at the man and the dog watching them from above. After awhile two or three horses came trotting up the ravine, and one who seemed the leader of the herd gave the signal to move. Finodri scrambled up to the highest part of the cliff and watched the group of moving

brown dots on the plain until a dip in the land hid them from sight.

That night he brought all his food up to the ridge and made camp. He was going to find out, if he could, where that herd made its home.

It took a long time, for they never spent two days together in the same place. On a hot day the mothers took their colts to sunny heights where the wind blew cooler than it did in the bottom lands; or they would spend the day feeding on the coarse lush grass of the waterside, or would stand for hours in a little shaded stream. Finodri used some of his plentiful spare time in cutting all the good grass he found and making it up into stacks when it was dry, and in fencing in a pleasant little hollow with a brook running through it and steep rocks on two sides.

He knew that his dog would never have been so much a part of himself if he had not trained the animal from puppyhood. It seemed to him that if he could get on friendly terms with one herd of horses, or perhaps capture and train a colt, he might be able to tame them. As it was, they never saw any man they did not fear. If they had not been fleet as the wind and able to use their teeth and hoofs ferociously, the wolves would have made an end of them long ago. If they had not been able to feed on pasture no



**Finodri found that taming a wild horse was a very
lively affair**

other animal wanted, land on which men could not live, men would have killed and eaten the last pony in time of scarcity. He thought that if they could be fenced in somehow and herded with dogs as the sheep were, they might be tamed. Somebody, long ago, must have built the first sheepfold.

But Finodri found that taming a wild horse was a very lively affair. He tried to creep up to a grazing pony one day and got a kick which nearly made an end of him then and there. When his skull stopped aching and he could stand up again, he tried coaxing the animals to feed on the grass which he cut for them, and that worked out very well. From tempting them to go on eating when he was within sight, he finally won them to eating out of his hand. The dog was always with him, and the horses seemed now to feel that these two strange animals were not dangerous.

Then Finodri had another idea. He made a halter of strong leather and tried to get it over the head of a horse that would let him come quite close.

But the arm of a man over his neck was more than any wild horse could bear, and Finodri was jerked off his feet in no time. To save himself from the lashing hoofs, he flung one leg over the

seesawing back and gripped the horse's sides with his knees. Away they flew, the dog racing after. Finodri could never have held on if his muscles and nerves had not been under perfect control, but he managed somehow to get the halter over the shaggy, tossing head and then swing himself up into a tree. The horse must have worked the halter off somehow, for he did not have it on the next day. Meanwhile Finodri began to see what this meant. If a man could sit astride a horse's back, he could go as fast as the horse, hunt other horses, escape from danger, travel in companies. He saw himself all in a flash the chief of a new tribe, — the People of the Moorland, the Horse People.

He did not go back to the hut on the mountainside until he had made sure that his dream was at least possible. He coaxed two little colts and their mothers into his fenced ravine and contrived in one way and another to gain their trust. He even proved that he could stay on the back of a horse if he once got there. He was more or less bruised most of the time, but his hard young muscles did not suffer much, and he was interested and excited from morning to night.

When at last he returned to Granny, she looked him over and nodded smilingly.

“ You have been doing what you like to do,”

she said. "Tell me all about it while I get you your supper."

"Ah!" said Finodri, with a contented sigh. "I have been thinking of that supper all the way home. Yes, I have been doing what I like, and you will think I am not telling the truth, at first."

Then he told her the story of the summer.

When he had finished she nodded again, wisely, and sat looking into the fire for a minute.

"You are like your father's father's father," she said. "He was my brother, and a chief. That is why you were not content to stay in the village of the Ploughing People, or the sheep-folds of the Flint People, or the forest dwellings of the Tree People, or thieve like Cholo, or hide away in caves and holes. You have the soul of a chief. You wish to make Miti, the daughter of Dodi, the wife of a chief, not the wife of a man who lives like a bear in a hole and eats roots."

Finodri nodded in his turn. "Yes," he said, "you see what is in my heart, my mother."

"This that you have told me is no lie," Granny went on. "I remember, when I was a child in my father's house far away from here, that strange dark men came from a far land beyond the great water. They said that in their country men tamed horses and made them carry loads, trading stores packed in leather bags or wicker

baskets. They gave me, who was then a little maid, a string of beads that made music, like this."

Granny rummaged in an old leather pouch and brought out something that tinkled. It was a small, hollowed-out shell of copper, like a nut-shell, with a tiny stone inside, and it rang merrily when it was shaken.

"These bells they hang on the harness that people may hear and know that the traders are coming," the old woman said. "And now, for you have found your work to do, I will go down to the village and live with Gwynned, the wife of Yeru, who is a daughter to me, and you shall have the things that are buried in the corner of the hut under my bed-place. They will make Miti a rich wife."

Thus Finodri, the man without a village, married the daughter of Dodi, one of the strong men of the Ploughing People. In due time he and Yeru and some other adventurous youths made camp on the moorland and succeeded in taming wild horses and breaking them to the halter. They were so much more useful alive and tame that the people gradually stopped killing them for food, especially as the horse country was guarded by strong men who could fight to protect their herds. Finodri was the first chief of

the Horse People, and because he had found out a new way of living they gave him a new name. He was no longer called Finodri, the Hairy One, but the Forerunner, the man who makes a road for other people to follow.

XVIII

THE LUCK PIECE

BROCK, the chief of Char'ng, was troubled in his mind. He was troubled on account of three persons,— his son, his friend, and a girl. His son Breck was away with his friend Machcha and the Stranger People who came from beyond the sea, and Ruadha, the daughter of Machcha, had come to ask his protection.

The way of it was this. The dark strangers who brought wonderful things from a far land were trading farther eastward, though they had never come as far as Llyn-dun. They met Breck on the coast somewhere and asked if it would be safe for them to go inland among the wild tribes. Breck told them that it might if they had some one to go along and interpret, and promised to talk it over with Machcha.

There was no doubt that it would be a good thing for the country for the strangers to push inland with their wares; and it would help to make the tribes more friendly. With Machcha and Breck and Yeru and Finodri the Forerun-

ner and their friends to help them, they would probably have no trouble, but without such help they would hardly venture. It ended in the trading boat from Llyn-dun coasting westward to meet the strangers and guide them to the market places inland.

Ruadha did not go. The strangers were friendly, but Machcha did not feel sure of their ways, and if there should be any trouble he did not wish her to be in it. She and Breck were to be married as soon as the expedition came back.

The time for it to come back was long past, and it began to seem as if something must have happened. One night Cholo of the Marsh People came paddling in with a story about the whole party, strangers and all, having been ambushed and killed and plundered somewhere in the west country, where the mines were. He showed the priest of Llyn-dun, Leofu, something he said he had found where the fight took place, after the plunderers had gone away. The priest looked very grave when he saw it. It was a silver coin with a hole in it, which he thought he had seen Machcha have. He was an old man and had known Machcha and his family ever since they came to the Fleet. It seemed very sad to think that only this little trinket was left of his friend. Of course the people of the Fleet

knew nothing of money, but sometimes, since the strangers had come into the country, one got stray coins in trade, drilled with a hole to hang them by. Most were copper, but Machcha's was a silver one with the head of one of the strangers' gods on it. The priest sent for Red Head and



showed the coin to her, and told her what Cholo had said.

Red Head turned rather white, but she did not cry. She looked carefully at the little disk of silver in her palm. If it were really the one her father had, it had a story that Leofu did not know. Machcha had given it to his daughter for a luck piece, and she had given it to Breck the night before he went away.

Most River girls would not have known one silver coin from another, but Red Head's eyes were very sharp, and it did not seem to her that this was the coin. The head on it did not look quite the same, for one thing, and it was tarnished. That night she rubbed and polished it, but it did not shine as hers had, and it seemed a trifle lighter in weight. Moreover, the bone needle which went easily through the hole in her coin stuck in this one. If it had been copper, Red Head would have had no doubt that Cholo had stolen it somewhere. But silver was hardly common enough for a marsh rat like Cholo to get.

Nevertheless, as time went on, nothing was heard of the absent ones, and the people began to talk of choosing a new chief. Then the priest sent for Ruadha again. He said that Urm of the Flint People wished to have her for a wife. Urm was almost as old as her father, but he was a powerful chief, and if Machcha were really dead it would be well to have as many friendly neighbors as possible. Ever since the fight between the River Men and the Flint Men, Machcha and Urm had been good friends. The priest believed that Ruadha could do no better for herself than to go to Urm's house and be his wife. Even her father could not object to that. Of

course, Ruadha had been promised to her old playmate Breck, but he was only son of the chief of a little River village.

All this did not sound to Ruadha as it would to a girl nowadays. She had always known that the daughters of men, particularly important men, could be married off when, and to whom their fathers chose. But Breck was the only husband she could think of with any sort of comfort. She lay awake all night thinking about it, and next day she went up the river and told Brock what was afoot.

Brock found himself in a hard place. He knew well enough that Urm would be angry if he were balked in his plan, and Urm and his Flint Men would be more than enough to destroy Brock's little settlement. However, he told Red Head to stay in Char'ng, and he would take care of her,—if he could.

Urm was more than ready to fight over it. He came to Char'ng in a few days, very cross and insulted, to see what Ruadha was doing there. When he found out, he was still more surprised and indignant.

“Who ever heard of a girl setting herself up to choose her husband? Those who are older know what is best for her,” he spluttered. “Who are you to interfere?”

"I am Brock, the chief of this village, and the maiden is betrothed to my son," said Brock, looking more than ever like an old, gray, obstinate badger defending his hole. Urm snorted.

"In our tribe," he said, "we still take our brides by force. Old customs are best."

Then Urm grasped his spear firmly by the middle and marched off with his beard pointed straight out in front of him. His very legs looked threatening.

Red Head knew what the kind of wedding Urm spoke of was like. She had seen one on the Farther Downs when Donal, the chief of that village, married. At the home of the bride there would be feasting, songs, dancing, festive garlands, and a procession of youths and maidens in holiday dress. Toward night or just after dark the bridegroom with some of his friends would rush in, capture the bride from her maidens and carry her off, blindfold and pinioned, to his house. It was a perfectly understood thing that she should struggle and scream and seem as unwilling as possible, but really it was all arranged beforehand. But in this case it would be grim, dead earnest. Unless the priest Leofu raised an objection, Urm could come with his friends and carry off his bride without any trouble at all.

After another long night of thinking, Red

Head told Brock that she would go home and talk with the priest. If Urm attacked Char'ng, there could be only one end to the fight. Then, after all the men Brock could muster had been killed, she would be carried off just the same. Why should Brock's father be killed on her account, and especially when it would do no good?

It really did seem as if Cholo had told the truth for once, and the men from Llyn-dun were all dead. The only scrap of a reason Red Head had for doubting it was that silver coin. If Cholo had got it where he said he did, it must be the very bit of silver she knew as she knew her own hand. If he had lied about that, why should not his whole story be a lie?

Neither the priest nor any one else noticed that though Red Head did not openly refuse to marry Urm she did not actually consent. The maidens began to gather flowers and prepare holiday attire, and the women began getting the feast ready. Miria was dead and could not be with her daughter, and her old friends felt as if Red Head were their own child, the child of the whole town. They were all very kind to her. But none of them seemed to think she could do anything but marry Urm.

The maidens who were to attend the bride had all been her friends and playmates. One, Tana,

the niece of the priest, was just her height and figure, but dark-haired. Tana had much to say about the wonderful good fortune of being the wife of a chief so powerful and well known as Urm of the Downs. Perhaps her uncle had asked her to coax Red Head into a better frame of mind. But it sounded rather as if she would like to be the bride herself.

This put an idea into Red Head's mind, and she acted upon it. The bride and her attendants all dressed alike, with scarves that veiled their heads and shoulders, but the bride wore some little ornament by which the bridegroom's party would know her. When Urm's brother came to make arrangements, Red Head showed him the little luck piece, and told him to look for a necklace of amber and jet, with that coin hung from it. When he had gone she sent for Tana.

"I will give you this for good fortune," she said, holding up the little silver trinket. And she hung it from the necklace of jet and amber which Tana wore on special occasions and considered her dearest treasure.

That was the night before the wedding. It was Red Head's last chance of escape. It gave her a curious feeling of relief when she thought that she had parted with the silver coin, for if she had really thought it was her own, the one she

gave to Breck, she could never have let it go. If Urm happened to take Tana in place of herself, she felt sure that Tana would make no objection, and perhaps, when Urm found that he had seized a willing bride, he would be satisfied too.

Next morning pipes were playing, horns blowing, boats coming up the river, companies of people in holiday dress thronging over the footways. From villages miles away guests came to the wedding of Ruadha, the daughter of Machcha the chief. The Temple of the Waters was hung with wreaths of plaited rushes, flowers, and leaves, as were all the other houses. The real wedding would be, of course, in the bridegroom's own village, but here everything went on as if there were to be no kidnapping at all.

Red Head was white and quiet, but she went through her part in the gayeties very gracefully, and looked very lovely when the scarf about her head was put back and one could see her face. On her shining red-gold hair she wore a wreath of white flowers, and so did Tana and the other maidens. Everybody had sheaves and wreaths and branches of blossoms, and Red Head trod on flowers and fragrant leaves strewn in her path, as the procession moved slowly toward the Temple of the Waters.

Suddenly there was a charge of armed men

up the hill in the darkness. The torches reeled, the lights danced wildly, the men pushed into the middle of the company, and Red Head was caught up and wrapped in some sort of blanket and borne blindfold at a great pace through the summer night.

It all happened in an instant. She could not cry out or struggle, though she heard shouting and laughter and shrieks and trampling behind. Then she felt a rocking motion and heard the splash and the lapping of water. She was in a boat. What did this mean? Urm's people were not boatmen. A cold fear seized her,—had Cholo brought some of his friends up to the Fleet to get hold of her, in revenge for the war against his tribe? She shivered at the thought.

Some one whispered in her ear:

“Don’t be afraid. Don’t move or make a noise. It’s Breck. Your father is up the river at Char’ng.”

“Oh!” sighed Ruadha. Then she lay back on the cushion of dry leaves with a blanket over them, in the bottom of the boat, and gave herself up to being perfectly happy.

It was all simple enough after that. Breck and Ruadha were married at once, in Brock’s house, where Machcha already was. Just afterward Yeru came in, grinning broadly. He had

news. Urm and his followers had pounced down on the wedding party not five minutes after Red Head had been taken away and carried off the girl, whoever she was, who wore the silver token on a necklace of jet and amber. Urm had got a bride, if he had not got the one he wanted.

Machcha explained. Floods had delayed the party. On the way back Breck had pushed on ahead of the rest, and meeting Yeru on the way, had learned what was going on and when the wedding was to be. His boat found a hiding place not far from the Pool, and Finodri the Forerunner had warned him when Urm and his people neared the town.

Then Red Head told of the false luck piece and where it had gone.

“That must have been one of those the strangers brought and dropped somewhere. It is not the real luck piece at all. The white shining silver is mixed with something commoner. It is not the same.”

“I knew it wasn’t,” said Red Head confidently. “That was why I gave it away.”

Urm must have thought fit to make the best of his bargain, for he kept Tana for his wife and said no more about it. Nobody ever knew what he said when he lifted the headdress and saw a dark-haired girl in place of Ruadha’s coppery

helmet of bright braids and her skin of milk and roses, for neither he nor Tana ever told. But most folk thought after awhile that he had come to prefer Tana because she had a more obedient disposition than the independent daughter of the chief. At any rate Breck and Ruadha did not care. The luck piece Breck had worn through that perilous journey — they really had come near death several times — was made into two silver rings, and Breck wore one and Ruadha the other as long as they lived, on the second finger of the left hand.

THE FAIRY MILLSTONE OF ASSODUN

A little round stone pierced through in the middle —
Who can read us the tiny riddle?
Was it a charm for blessing or bane?
Was it a millstone for fairy grain?
Was it a kobold sun-dial ring
Or the chariot wheel of an elfin King?

Never a goblin smoothed its whorl,
But a Stone Age man for a Primitive girl,
Dreaming the while he shaped his ring
How she would spin by the fire and sing
Lullaby, roundelay, rime and rune,—
The old, old singing of Assodun.

Long ago, when the world was young,
Ere ever the bells of the pack-horse rung,
Before a wheel-track dented the down
Or lamps were lighted in London town,
That spindle-whorl from the spinster's hand
Was lost and kept in the heart of the land.

Many an army since that day
Has come and gone by the Icknield Way.
Many a keffil to fort and town
Brought the news of the fight on Terrible Down,
And Alfred's foot trod the spindle-whorl
That had lain in the hand of a Stone Age girl.

On a Midsummer morning, sweet and fair,
A Chippenham weaver found it there,
A fairy gift for a Wiltshire maid,
That none should molest or make her afraid;
A spindle-whorl that had heard the rune
Of the old hut-circles of Assodun!

NOTES

“Down,” “dune” and “don” in such compounds as “Snowdon”, “Ashdown”, etc., all come from an original British word meaning a hill such as can be held as a fort. The Downs of England are rounded turf-y hills, not cut up into ravines and peaks like American ranges, and seldom wooded on top. They are among the oldest inhabited districts of Britain. “A-down”, meaning from the down, into the valley, was in time shortened into the preposition “down.”

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The anchor described in “Little Red-Head” was discovered in a river of Sussex and is now in the museum at Lewes.

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According to good authority, the lots in the neighborhood of Park Lane, London, actually follow the outline of the strips of land into which that ground was divided for cultivation, in the era of the primitive village, as described in “The Spring Ploughing.”

* * *

A coracle from Ireland is in the National Museum at Washington, D. C. Dried apples, grain, and other remnants of prehistoric food may be seen in the British Museum. The London Museum, recently opened in Stafford House, contains many relics of the life of prehistoric man on the Thames.

* * *

“Fleot” or Fleet is an old word for a river and is found in such names as Byfleet, Stillfleet, and Northfleet. The Fleet which flowed from the hills above Holborn into the Thames gave its name to Fleet Street in London. In the fifteenth century ships could sail up this river to Holborn Bridge. In the time of Dean Swift it was an open sewer.

* * *

It is not absolutely certain that the Phœnicians ever did come to Britain as described in “The People Who Came”, but the tradition is fairly well established, and is referred to by Kipling in his poem, “Merrow Down.” It seems certain at any rate that strangers from the continent must have visited the southern coast of Britain at an extremely early date. They may have been Iberians or Gauls, if not Phœnicians.

* * *

Cæsar records the fact that the Britons of his day held it unlawful to eat hare, chicken, or goose, but reared them for the sake of amusement.

* * *

The not-fire or need-fire used on certain especial occasions was made by friction with a fire drill long after flint and steel were in general use. In the Glasgow Museum there is a specimen of the old fire drill.

* * *

There is a tradition that a battle was once fought on Terrible Down, in Sussex, in which the warriors “waded knee deep in blood.” It would seem that this must have been in prehistoric days, since the down has had this name ever since its history was known, and there is no

record of any later battle there. It is literally true that, as suggested in the poem, "The Fairy Millstone of Issodun", relics of prehistoric life may now and then be picked up by any one making holiday in rural England. The spindle whorls were at one time called "fairy millstones."

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